

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Revolutionary Communist Group

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BOB GANNON

A new socialist movement?

To understand why this has happened and what can be done to change it, the socialist movement will have to come to terms with the imperialist character of the British state and its impact on the British working class movement. In particular it will have to recognise the British Labour Party's irrevocable identification with the interests of British imperialism.

Such an understanding is at the root of class politics in Britain. It will not come easy to a socialist movement whose politics are dominated by developments in the Labour Party and which has little contact with the less privileged layers of the working class. This was evident at the Socialist Conference held on 17/18 June.

The Socialist Conference was set up by sections of the Labour left and other socialists on the fringes of the Labour Party as a response to the right-wing shift in British Labour politics – a shift which had accelerated after the defeat of the miners' strike. This right-wing shift has destroyed the Labour left's political base in the Labour Party and severely undermined their influence in British Labour politics. They set up the Socialist Conference in an attempt to rebuild that base and restore their past political influence.

Many socialists, both inside and outside the Labour Party, recognising what was, in effect, a crisis of legitimacy of the ideology of the left, joined the Socialist Conference believing it could offer a genuine path forward in the struggle against capitalism. The Socialist Conference has also created a non-sectarian forum for socialists to discuss important political ideas. That is why the RCG has attended and intervened in the discussions at all three Socialist Conferences and forcefully argued for creating a political movement and a political practice independent of the Labour Party.

WESTERN ALLIANCE – A CRUSADE AGAINST PROGRESS

It was at a small workshop on foreign policy for nuclear disarmament at the third Socialist Conference that a discussion took place which focused on the imperialist character of Britain and the slavish adherence of the British Labour Party to the interests of British imperialism. Ralph Miliband, a founding member of the Socialist Society, argued that the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union has never been the main cause of world conflicts since 1945.

'The real conflict in the world has been based upon the determination of the Western alliance, led by the United States, to pursue a conservative and reactionary crusade against all revolutionary and reform movements throughout the world.'

The Soviet Union, he argued, was not primarily viewed in imperialist circles as a power which is aggressive and expansionist waiting to pounce on Europe or the rest of the world. Rather it is seen as a power which through its intervention in the Third World and elsewhere makes more difficult the task of containing revolution and radical reform. However much there may be detente and rapprochement between the US and the Soviet Union this determination of the Western Alliance to resist popular movements of rebellion and reform remains fundamental.

He went on to say that Britain was a prominent part of this reactionary crusade since 1945. Indeed, that Ernest Bevin, foreign minister in the 1945 Labour government, was a major architect in the creation of this alliance and further that Labour government after Labour government has faithfully, if not slavishly, followed this.

That is why, according to Miliband, the call to withdraw from NATO has to assume, for the socialist movement, the same weight as the nationalisation of the means of pro-

In 1989 the British socialist movement has been forced to come to terms with two important anniversaries. Thatcher has been in power for ten years. British troops have been in Ireland for 20 years sent in by a Labour government in August 1969. Both these anniversaries highlight the political isolation of the socialist left in Britain. In fact, in just over ten years of Thatcher governments, the socialist left has been relegated to the political wilderness.

duction, distribution and exchange. Accompanying this there would have to be a much more positive support for liberation movements everywhere.

RCG members developed this important point during the discussion, in particular in relation to detente between the US and the Soviet Union, by pointing to the double-edged nature of Gorbachev's foreign policy initiatives. His welcome proposals on peace and disarmament had sown confusion in the ranks of the imperialists and were beginning to sow divisions between them. But the danger with the Soviet Union's concessions made to imperialism in Asia and Southern Africa, is that US imperialism, while accepting some form of peace amongst the powerful, peace with the Soviet Union, would continue to wage war against liberation movements and revolutionary democratic regimes. There might well be moves towards peace and disarmament between the main imperialist powers in the NATO alliance and the Soviet Union but imperialism's counter-offensive against the small socialist, revolutionary, progressive democratic regimes of the Third World continues unabated.

There is another danger. The major imperialist powers in Europe are attempting to build a supra-European imperialist bloc to meet the challenge of US and Japanese imperialism. The left, isolated in Britain, has recently acquired an enthusiasm for European integration, ignoring the consequences for revolutionary movements and democratic regimes in the Third World.

All this has crucial implications for the socialist struggle worldwide. The working class represents a much greater proportion of the population of oppressed nations today than at any previous time. The overall weight of the working class in the liberation movements is greater than ever before. Revolutionary change in countries like South Africa or Brazil is going to have a major impact on the whole balance of forces between socialism and imperialism. This is the context in which breaking with the NATO alliance is the key to an internationalist policy in the British working class movement in this country.

This standpoint which begins to place an anti-imperialist strategy at the heart of a socialist programme has been the standpoint of the RCG for more than 10 years. It has vital implications for the future struggles of the working class movement. It was heartening, even if it was not a representative view, to hear it being expressed at the Socialist Conference.

Another very positive feature of the Socialist Conference is its standpoint on Ireland. Its policy review says that the 'first goal of a commitment to internationalism and peace must be to end the partition imposed on Ireland in 1921 by the British government and the Ulster Unionists'. It, therefore, calls for British withdrawal

from Ireland politically, militarily and economically. The appearance of Gerry Adams on the platform at the final plenary session was also very welcome. His speech spelling out in thorough detail what was demanded from British socialists in supporting self-determination for the Irish people was well received and timely (extracts from his speech are printed on page 16). It remains to be seen whether the Socialist Conference can translate those demands into practice.

THE BRITISH LEFT AND THE LABOUR PARTY

However, the Achilles heel of all British left organisations is the way they relate to the Labour Party. The Socialist Conference is no exception. Once the question of which are the forces or agencies capable of implementing radical social change in this country is raised, the Socialist Conference exposes its critical and perhaps irresolvable weakness. For the question posed concerns the forces which will/can place an anti-imperialist strategy at the heart of their political programme?

Miliband, while believing that the constituencies for radical social change exist, rejects the view that the Labour Party will be the agency for that social change. 'The kind of demands we are making (eg withdrawal from NATO) are revolutionary demands and cannot be expected to be undertaken by a government which is steeped in anti-revolutionary thinking'. While he was not prepared to say that people working in the Labour Party are wasting their time, he believes that a new socialist party is needed. He thought however that the process of building such a party required a long perspective taking perhaps ten, twenty or even thirty years.

This position, however, ignores one crucial point which RCG members raised during the conference. Over the last four or five years we have seen movements on peace and disarmament, on the struggle in southern Africa, on Ireland and more recently on the Poll Tax constrained and limited by the political priorities of the Labour Party and, in particular, the need to create the conditions necessary for the re-election of a Labour government. How will the kind of mass pressure needed to fight for the revolutionary demands contained in the Socialist Conference Policy Review be built from below when so many socialists are prepared to constrain the movement to the interests of the Labour Party? No progress is possible unless an organised political fight is conducted against the Labour Party.

This point does not only apply to the left inside the Labour Party. It equally applies to the majority of the left outside. At the final plenary session Pete Alexander from the SWP made a rabble rousing speech which, among other things, supported the right of the IRA to take up arms. He

ended it by saying that the SWP was opposed to proportional representation because it would prevent the return of a majority Labour government. That is the SWP will continue to support the thoroughly undemocratic election procedures in Britain to ensure the election of the racist, pro-imperialist Labour Party, which if elected, will continue to wage war on the IRA.

The RCG argued in a leaflet prepared for the Conference 'Meet the challenge. Break with Labour' and during the Conference sessions that the Socialist Conference could only go forward if it was prepared to end years of subordination to British Labour politics. It had to end its concentration on the more privileged layers of the working class and make a turn to the millions of working class people suffering the brunt of Thatcher's onslaught and who at present have no political representation in Thatcher's Britain.

The Socialist Conference refuses to confront this political issue. It prefers to leave the question of building a new party off the political agenda to an, as yet, unspecified date. Having noted in its policy review that a socialist party would be 'ideally' necessary to 'tackle the problems of political and economic power', it goes on:

'In Britain such a party whether a transformed Labour Party or a separate party with significant political influence is not on the immediate agenda'.

This was reaffirmed at the final plenary session when Tony Benn said very clearly that the Socialist Conference was not a new political party but a 'permanent and powerful movement which intends to play an important role in politics in the 1990s'. Hilary Wainwright was even more explicit when she said that she was not talking about an alternative to the Labour Party but a base from which to influence it. She envisaged a movement that would be strong enough to force the leadership of the Labour Party to make a coalition with the left.

At best the Socialist Conference finds itself with a totally unrealistic perspective of placing the revolutionary demands of its policy review – eg British withdrawal from NATO and Ireland, taking major financial institutions and private companies into public ownership – on an anti-revolutionary agency of social change, namely, the British Labour Party. At worst the Socialist Conference becomes little more than a vehicle to rebuild the influence of the Labour left inside and outside the Labour Party by perpetuating the deception that it is possible to change the character and nature of the Labour Party through pressure group politics.

Given that the Labour Party 'is not and probably never was a socialist party' (Tony Benn) and, in our view, never will be one, the task for socialists is surely to create the conditions for building a new socialist party. The Socialist Conference will not contribute to this development if its only purpose is to keep those who want to build a new socialist movement buzzing round the rotten corpse of the Labour Party. On the contrary it will hold it back. ■



Ireland – August 1969

‘The left, isolated in Britain, has recently acquired an enthusiasm for European integration, ignoring the consequences for revolutionary movements...’



South Africa revolt 1984–1986

‘No progress is possible unless an organised political fight is conducted against the Labour Party.’



‘... we have seen movements constrained by the political priorities of the Labour Party.’

Poll Tax fight continues

LORNA REID

The Government is running into more problems with implementing the Poll Tax. Proposals for a 'safety net' to soften the impact of the Poll Tax in inner city areas have come under fire from Tory backbenchers whose constituents would have to provide the subsidy at approximately £75 per head. The backbenchers are demanding that a subsidy of £1 billion is made available from Treasury funds.

Many councils in England and Wales have issued registration forms which breach the Data Protection Act because they ask for information of personal relationships between people living in the same house and details of their past and future addresses. Councils guilty of breaching the Act are barred from using any information obtained from the offending forms to implement the tax.

Councils in inner cities, particularly in London, are finding the registration process difficult. In Lambeth, only 25% of distributed forms have been completed and returned. In other London boroughs less than 50% of distributed forms have been returned. The main Poll Tax registration office in Isl-

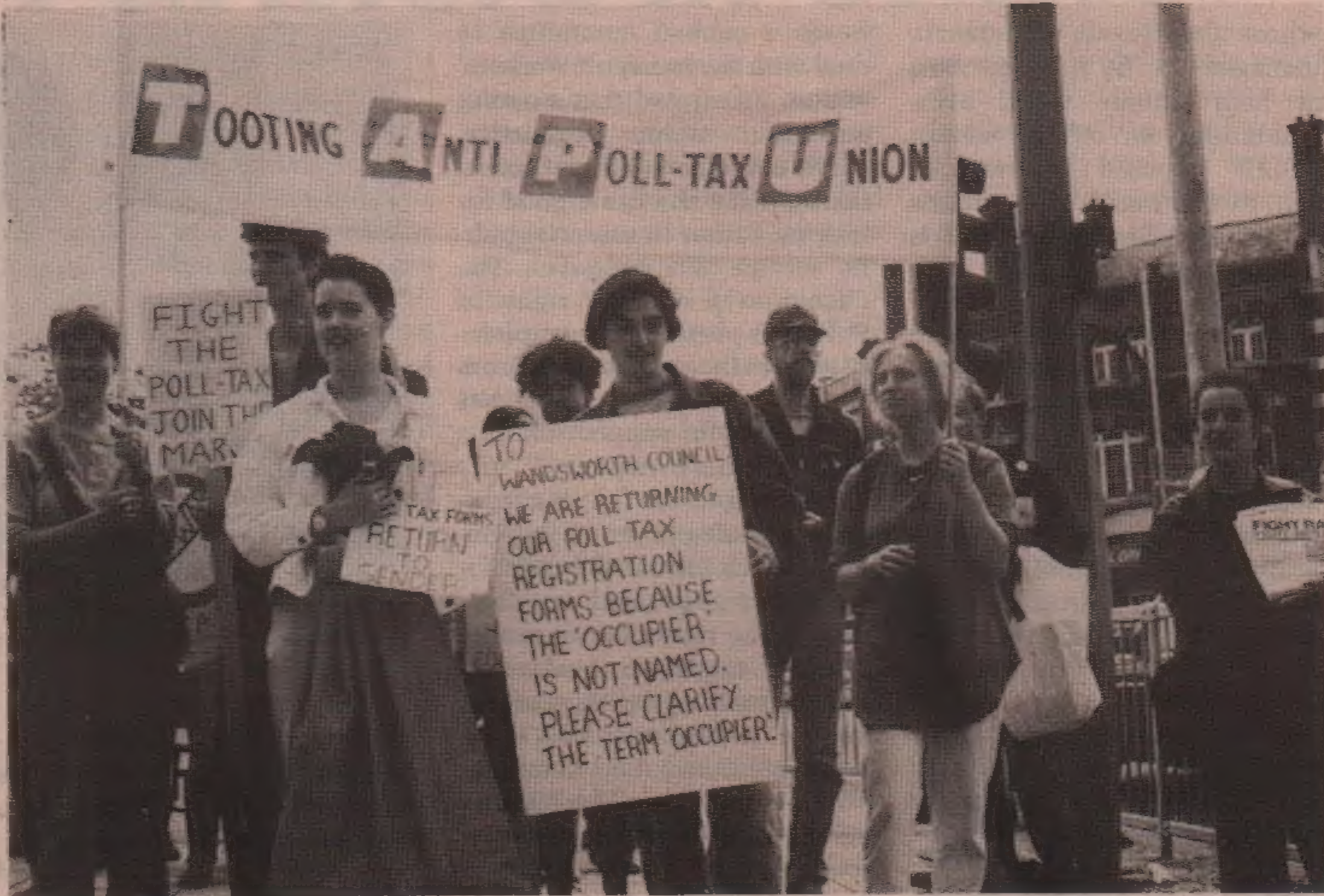
ington was badly damaged by a fire in June.

In Central Region, Scotland, more than 50% of adults are behind in their Poll Tax payments. 24% have not paid at all. One million adults in Scotland have so far refused to pay their Poll Tax.

As the reality of the Poll Tax hits working class people in Scotland, England and Wales a new determination to resist is emerging. Working class communities are uniting to oppose registration and payment, threatening to exploit the government's existing difficulties with the Poll Tax.

Standing in the way of building a new resistance movement are those forces on the left who are determined to restrict the anti-Poll Tax campaign to the narrow confines of the official labour movement. Militant, the dominant force within the Scottish federations, has played a major role in mobilising for the non-payment campaign. However, their strategy is to push that campaign into the lap of the official labour movement:

'The authority of the official leadership of the labour movement in the eyes of the mass of the workers is still considerable. The anti-Poll Tax campaign therefore must continually orient itself towards the labour



movement and aim to push its leaders onto the field of battle.' (Bob Wylie, Militant 30 June 1989)

The SWP shares Militant's obsession with the official labour movement. Ignorant to the simple fact that the trade union movement has rejected the call to fight the Poll Tax their strategy is confined to trade union action only. Within the anti-Poll Tax campaign they argue

against action taken by the community to resist registration and payment.

In London the Tooting Anti-Poll Tax Union, initiated by local RCG members, is committed to non-registration, non-collection and non-payment. It involves all sections of the community including trade union activists, Labour Party members and other organisations. As its non-registration campaign dev-

elops SWP members argue that the priority is to mobilise the trade unions to oppose the Poll Tax and argue against involving the community in a campaign of non-registration.

This strategy is increasingly viewed as bankrupt by genuine anti-Poll Tax activists across the country. *Short Circuit*, a community oriented bulletin distributed in Edinburgh, carried the following:

'The Lothian Federation, firmly committed to collective non-payment, is still dominated by those elements, the socialist rearguard, who insist that the way forward is to pressure labour and trade union leaders in leading the struggle against the Poll Tax. This is supposed to show what is already obvious - that the labour leadership are part of the problem, not part of the solution...

'They are against any self-originated direct action where people might get a sense of their own power and ability to organise independently of these self appointed vanguards.'

The 'socialist rearguard' is being challenged by working class people, refusing to wait for the labour movement to decide the time is right to fight. Fresh, defiant methods of resistance are emerging from their communities. Sheriff's Officers who attempted entry into houses in Aberdeen and Glasgow to assess household effects to pay the fines for failure to register were blocked by anti-Poll Tax protesters and forced to leave empty handed. This is the beginning of a new challenge to the Poll Tax. It must be defended from all attempts to subordinate its needs to the interests of the Labour Party and trade union movement. ■

Privatisation plan lies in deep water

ROBERT CLOUGH

Since our last report on water privatisation, the Tory government has encountered a sea of troubles as they attempt to steer the Water Bill through its final stages.

Only two months ago, Environment Minister Mr Ridley told the House of Commons that the total cost of compliance with EC directives on the quality of drinking water, beach cleanliness and sewage disposal would be some £2.4 billion, over an unspecified period. Now that the EC seems determined to enforce compliance by 1993, the whole picture is clearer; and

whilst the government has unofficially doubled the cost to £5 billion, the true figure is in the region of £12 to £15 billion. Given that the sell-off will only raise some £6 to £7 billion after writing off £5 billion debts, it can be seen why even the City punters are no longer very keen.

As it is, the Government is trying to establish 10 year pricing mechanisms with each of the 10 water authorities. These will establish the extent to which the privatised companies can raise water charges beyond the rate of inflation - the so-called K factor. At present, K is about 8%, which with inflation at 8% means water charges rising at 15% per annum. And this is cal-

culated on the lower estimate of compliance costs!

Meanwhile, the battle over pollution from sewage works continues. In April, we reported that the government had canvassed water authorities to supply a list of their filthiest sewage works - those that had broken their own operating conditions in at least two of the previous three years. These would be inspected with a view to applying relaxation orders which would render them immune from prosecution for breaking EC regulations until 1993. The Department of the Environment said it expected only 'a few hundred' to be involved. At the last count, the list was

nearer 1,100, over one sixth of all sewage works. The Pollution Inspectorate, understaffed as it is, could not hope to inspect them all by November, the date of privatisation, still less by August, when it is due to hand over its powers to the new National Rivers Authority.

The government response has been to amend the Water Bill to cripple the River Authority, the supposed independent watchdog of water quality the Bill itself establishes. This in itself was a concession to the EC, which would not accept that the private companies could police themselves. The new amendment is a piece of subterfuge worthy of this government, and

was slipped in to an obscure part of the Bill couched in the most obscure language. It basically prevents the River Authority from using evidence of sewage pollution gathered prior to the date of privatisation. In other words, pollution prior to November is irrelevant. Because prosecution depends on evidence arising from up to a year's monitoring, there will be sufficient time to process all the relaxation orders before the private companies become liable.

This is happening whilst the Prosecution Service is considering whether to prosecute the South Western Water Authority for poisoning 20,000 people in

Cornwall last year, whilst the sewer rat population grew 30% last year, 50-70% of them carrying the lethal Weil's disease (see April/May issue), and whilst the inhabitants of eight London boroughs recently found midge larvae in their drinking water. Most areas of the country now drink polluted water, which contains excessive levels of any one or all of aluminium, lead or nitrates.

With a 15% poll for the Greens at the EC elections, the Tories face not just financial problems on water privatisation. It has the makings of either a political or financial disaster. For the sake of our health, let us hope it is both. ■

Thatcher loses Euro-election 'referendum'

NICKI JAMESON

In the European Parliamentary Elections 120 million people in 12 countries are eligible to vote to elect 518 representatives to a virtually powerless assembly.

The turnout was, as usual, very low. Britain's was, also as usual, lowest of all. The Tories won 32 seats and Labour 45, an exact reversal of 1984 figures.

The Tory campaign was appalling. Deriving its inspiration from Thatcher's infamous Bruges speech, its crude slogans were 'Don't let Socialism in by the back door,' and worse still, 'If you stay at home on 15 June you'll live on a diet of Brussels.' Embarrassed wet Tories fell over themselves to disown the anglo-



Sara Parkin leader of the Greens sups organic champagne centric garbled propaganda put out by their central office and to blame it and Thatcher's personal intransigence for the loss of seats. The split between Thatcher and Lawson, the (un)timely intervention of Edward Heath,

government opposition to a range of common sense EEC measures all contributed to the debacle. There is no doubt the Conservative party lost this election; the question which remains is did anybody win it?

Labour won 40.1% of the vote. Before the election they proclaimed it a 'Referendum on Thatcherism', afterwards they congratulated themselves on their return to 'the mainstream of British politics.' In the light of Thatcher's raving island nationalism, the once anti-EEC party had become the new Europeans. After all, if Europeanism and multilateralism equal 'electability,' who are Kinnock and Co to balk at a little (very little) left-wing dissent when they had just walked all over the feelings of voters and local party members

in Vauxhall, ditching even a token commitment to anti-racist politics? In the Glasgow by-election Labour again won the seat but the SNP vote increased substantially. In the Euro-elections the SNP doubled their vote to 25%.

But the real victors were the Greens who took 14.9% of the vote which would have given them 11 seats under Proportional Representation, proving that voters from all over the political spectrum are concerned about environmental issues and that nobody believes a government which claims to be 'green' while it privatises our water and refuses to put safeguards on its cleanliness.

From a Communist standpoint the most interesting Green voters are not the disenchanted

Democrats or village Tories but the sizeable section who used their vote to protest against the Labour sell-out. Although the Greens are essentially a middle-class party and there are real dangers in their 'small is beautiful' anti-growth politics they stand in firm opposition to nuclear weapons, NATO, the EEC itself and the Poll Tax. They have the most credible claim to the votes of those who care about the future of humanity. Within the EEC as a whole the Socialists are now the largest group. The Labour Party now fits into the mould of 'Euro-Socialism.' The Socialist parties welcome the single market of 1992 provided it is accompanied by a 'social dimension.' The only Communist Party to do well in the elections was the reformist, pro-

EEC pro-NATO Italian PCI. This leaves the Greens and a few independents in the unlikely role of left opposition to and within the EEC.

Meanwhile the extreme right has increased in strength, holding its 10 French and 4 Italian seats and making gains in Belgium and West Germany where the Nazi Republikaner party won 6 seats. Schonhuber, the Republikaner leader, admires Margaret Thatcher, describing her as the greatest statesperson in Europe. His party is committed to the reunification of Germany and virulently racist immigration controls. Their support is predominantly working class, 70% of the voters are under 30, two-thirds are men; a large proportion are soldiers and policemen. ■

News

Workers fight on

Poland—communism in retreat

LORNA REID

The recent wave of industrial action by transport workers, local government workers and dockers coincides with a rising rate of inflation. With inflation now at 8.3% Thatcher knows that workers will demand wage rises to at least maintain their living standards and is out to prevent this. Moves by management to remove national pay bargaining and to impose unacceptable working conditions have fuelled workers' determination to fight to defend their conditions of work and living standards.



NALGO Strikers

Thatcher's strategy of weakening the role of the unions through the removal of national pay bargaining is recognised by the unions as one which will divide the workforce between those employed in the job hungry North and the affluent South East where increased wage offers are necessary to retain the work force.

A series of one day 'unofficial' strikes by members of ASLEF and the NUR began in May organised by co-ordinators drawn from rank and file members

whose identity was unknown to management. By July members of both unions voted overwhelmingly for 'official' action. ASLEF imposed an overtime ban, disrupting 25% of services in the South East and the NUR is holding one day strikes each week.

Their action has forced BR to negotiate with both unions through ACAS and significantly to postpone their proposed 'action stations' package, widely viewed as an attack on black workers who make up a large proportion of station staff on London Underground. BR's latest offer at press time was 8.8% without strings but the NUR are pressing for more. The white collar union, TSSA, has accepted the offer.

London bus workers have been balloted on strike action to increase their pay offer of 8%. Engineers are holding one day strikes. The transport workers' action has received wide support from a public that is dissatisfied with the appalling conditions on the rail, bus and tube systems.

Thatcher, faced with a renewed industrial challenge since the defeat of the miners' strike, is leaving nothing to chance. She

heads a cabinet committee to deal with the transport workers' action. Frustrated that existing anti-trade union legislation could not prevent official action taking place she has argued for making strikes in essential public service jobs unlawful. The champion of workers' rights in Poland is prepared to completely remove the right to strike from workers in Britain. She has received little support for this even from her own party.

The dockers are fighting to retain the safeguards of the National Dock Labour Scheme: for nationally negotiated pay deals and for the right of their union, T&GWU, to play an equal role to management on matters of discipline. A national dock strike began at midnight on 11 July involving 40 docks. The T&GWU claims that the dock employers have spent up to £50 million of taxpayers money on redundancy payments in an attempt to purge the docks of registered dockers and replace them with casual labour. The union is considering taking legal action against employers who delivered compulsory redundancy notices to dockers in Cardiff on the eve of the strike.

NALGO, the local government union, is fighting for a 12% pay increase, retention of national pay negotiations and no increase on the 35 hour week. In July NALGO held a series of six days of strike action.

Thatcher is out to crush the unions and only a determined fight will achieve demands to secure decent living standards and hold back the unrelenting attack on trade unionism.

So far the Labour Party's 'support' has been restricted to calling for fair, unobstructed talks to meet the workers' pay demands. No statement of support has been made on the industrial action currently taking place. ■



A Polish nationalist reads a Solidarity newspaper

EDDIE ABRAHAMS

Communism in Poland is undergoing an acute crisis. Its severity was highlighted in the results of the 4 June election. The Communist Party of Poland (formally known as the PUWP - Polish United Workers Party) was humiliated by Solidarity. Solidarity won 92 of the 100 seats to the newly created Senate and 160 of 161 seats contested for the Sejm (Parliament). Leading communists who stood in 35 unopposed seats, including 8 Politburo members, failed to get the minimum 50 per cent of the vote to elect them to the Sejm. There is now talk of the formation of a Solidarity government, or at the least a coalition PUWP/Solidarity government.

George Bush's visit to the country on 10 and 11 July drew attention to the severe economic crisis which is aggravating and accelerating the break-up of Polish Communism. Thousands greeted Bush, some with placards reading 'good communists are dead communists'. Both PUWP and Solidarity leaders urged him to help secure a \$10 billion aid package to rescue an economy suffering a \$39 billion foreign debt, massive inflation and stagnation. While the PUWP seems almost helpless, Solidarity leaders are negotiating with US millionaires to bring capitalist investment into Poland as a cure for the crisis.

Nearly 8 years ago in December 1981, when General Jaruzelski imposed martial law in Poland to suppress what was then an already reactionary Solidarity leadership, we noted that: 'This extreme measure had become necessary to defend the very existence of the socialist state.' At the same time we

recognised that the ranks of Solidarity were filling with working class people with genuine grievances because 'failures, mistakes and in some cases the personal corruption of leading Party members over the past decade have contributed to the crisis and to the Communist Party's disastrous divorce from the trade union movement encompassing millions of working people. It is this divorce which has allowed bourgeois and petit-bourgeois influences to masquerade as the friends of the Polish workers.'

However, the Communist Party, rather than attempt to rectify its errors and mobilise a working class movement to oppose the tide of imperialist fostered reaction has made concession after concession to bourgeois and market forces, already strong in Poland. So much so that a thriving, wealthy bourgeois class grew up in the very leadership of the Communist Party.

A series of economic reforms have led to the rapid development of wealthy private capitalists living in palaces on the one hand and poverty stricken workers on the other. In Poland today, there is no ceiling on the number of workers a business may employ and the law forbids state officials from restricting business freedom. Having eliminated state monopoly of foreign trade the law reduces to a minimum the government's direct involvement in the economy. Central elements of the Solidarity programme we attacked in 1981 have been introduced by the PUWP government itself.

Such developments, combined with the already powerful bourgeois and petit-bourgeois currents in the Church and countryside gave a tremendous boost to Solidarity which had become the political instrument for resurgent counter-revolution.

tion. Solidarity, masquerading as a working class movement has been the Trojan horse for imperialism in Poland. Solidarity is totally undemocratic, has an anti-working class programme and its leader Lech Walesa lives in a mansion built with the proceeds from the imperialists.

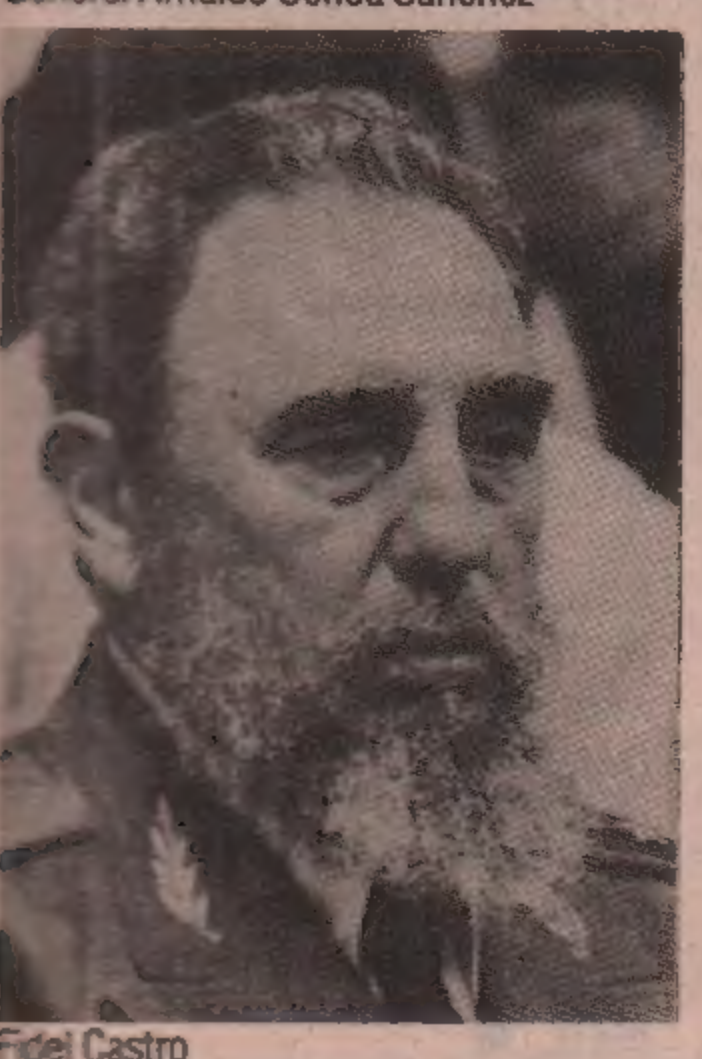
However, the PUWP, discredited, riven with corruption and paralysed by pro-capitalist factions within its own ranks, proved itself incapable of politically defeating Solidarity. It had in addition lost any moral standing which would have allowed it to take forceful steps against counter-revolution. Caught in an impossible position, the PUWP began negotiations with Solidarity which led to the 4 June elections.

The prospects for the Polish working class are grim. Lacking any strong political organisation they can really call their own, with honest communists within the PUWP isolated, they will find it difficult to resist the cuts in living standards, increases in unemployment which are being planned and the removal of basic rights they have enjoyed for the past 40 years. Since the elections the vow to 'serve socialism' has been removed from the oath of loyalty sworn by newly elected MPs.

Eight years ago when the rest of the left was praising Solidarity we wrote: 'If Solidarity were to succeed, then Poland would be turned into a base for the counter-revolution against the whole socialist camp.' As these words, unfortunately, are proving true, the once proud supporters of reactionary Solidarity are silent. At the time we warned them to halt their support for Solidarity and instead concentrate their energy on attacking British and other imperialist powers conspiring, through their banks, to strangle socialism. They refused. They are thus partly responsible for setbacks the working class in Poland are suffering.

Harsh days lie ahead for the Polish working class. From the lessons it will learn and from the influence of communists who undoubtedly exist within the PUWP it is sincerely hoped that a genuine communist movement will once again be built in Poland. We can make our contribution by fighting to end all imperialist and capitalist intervention in Poland and demanding that all Polish debts to British banks are scrapped. ■

Cuba smashes corruption



TREVOR RAYNE

On 12 June Division General Arnaldo Ochoa Sanchez, hero of the Republic, member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, and three other senior military officers were arrested and later charged with high treason. They admitted to drug smuggling and accepting bribes of \$3.2 million from the Colombian Medellin drug cartel. They were stripped of their rank and party membership. At dawn on 13 July all four were placed before a firing squad and shot.

Just a week previously retired US Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver North was given a three year suspended sentence, fined \$150,000 and ordered to perform community service against drug abuse. North was not even charged with drug running despite documents which show how he boasted of using drug money to buy arms for the contras. He will be able to pay off his fine with the proceeds of just six celebrity lectures!

The US illegal narcotic market

is now valued at \$140 billion; exceeded only by food, motor vehicles and the military. 'Drug dealers' gunfire echoes in the halls of Congress' runs a New York Times headline about gang warfare in Washington. Los Angeles is undergoing a banking boom with billions in cash surpluses as money laundering switches from Miami. Were the US government to seriously attempt to root out drug dealing it would have to put whole sections of the financial-military-administrative oligarchy against the wall!

Cocaine, the addiction, the super profits and surrounding violence thrives in the moral sewer of US capitalism. Like a cancer it spreads. At least four Caribbean island governments are implicated in the Medellin trade at the highest level. US agents infiltrated the Ochoa operation. They hoped to stain the prestige of the Cuban Revolution, to wound the people's morale and worse. By its exemplary action the Cuban Revolution has proved that no one can act with impunity, no one is above the masses. ■

Thatcher's democracy

GARY CLAPTON

In Thatcher's last decade there have been 49 pieces of legislation affecting local government. Most have attacked what little democracy there was. The 50th local government Bill threatens to accelerate this process by undermining the political activity of over 140,000 employers.

Clause 1, subsection 5, of the Local Government and Housing Bill says that certain categories

of employee will be unable to engage in political activities 'as may be prescribed . . . by regulations made by the Secretary of State'.

Anyone earning over £13,500 per year (this includes London weighting) is targeted in this move which seeks to prevent 'principal officers' being employed by one authority while being a councillor for another. Employees coming under its terms would be barred from election canvassing, writing letters to papers, displaying posters in windows and speaking in a way

'that might be regarded as engaging in party political debate' (Widdicombe report 1986).

The Bill further proposes to give local authorities the power to draw up a list of 'politically restricted' posts whose salaries fall below the £13,500 mark. This list will follow ministerial guidelines.

Thatcher's most recent revelation to Sky TV displays her and her kind's plans - 'That's one of the problems of democracy today and it's the public sector unions that are the problem . . .'



Act-Up London continues its campaign for upgraded benefits for people with AIDS and related conditions. Following previous demonstrations at DSS headquarters in Whitehall, Minister Nicholas Scott issued a statement which failed to acknowledge the special, expensive needs of people with AIDS and other chronic illnesses. So Act-Up returned to the DSS to protest and lobbied Parliament to amend the current Social Security Bill. Act-Up asks all supporters to write to their MP raising this issue.

Nato staves off crisis

BOB SHEPHERD

NATO's Brussels summit meeting at the beginning of June opened with a 'disarmament package' proposed by George Bush and agreed by the Summit. The package called for reductions in the troop levels of the USA and the Soviet Union in Europe by 20%, and a reduction in land based strike aircraft to leave both NATO and the Warsaw Treaty with a ceiling 15% below present NATO levels. Agreement on these cuts in conventional forces and the start of their implementation by 1992, are to be a precondition for NATO entering talks with the Soviet Union on the reduction of land based short-range nuclear weapons (SNF) in Europe.

These proposals by Bush are a feeble attempt to regain the political initiative after the announcement in May by Gorbachev that the Soviet Union would unilaterally remove 500 short range nuclear missiles from Europe. The Gorbachev proposals had thrown NATO into disarray, coming at the time when Thatcher's and Bush's insistence on implementing a modernisation programme for NATO's SNF weapons was drawing strong opposition from West Germany. As Bush himself put it, his proposals 'should give

those who have difficulty with our position on SNF a chance to regroup and rethink and give them a little more leeway that they haven't had before'.

The 'leeway' that Bush is talking about is his linking of talks on the removal of SNF weapons from Europe, to the implementation of the cuts in conventional forces by 1992. The Bush proposals are a deliberate attempt to stop the Soviet peace offensive. The proposals themselves are heavily weighted in imperialism's favour. The cuts in troop levels take no account of British, French and Canadian troops in West Germany. The cuts in strike-aircraft are limited to land based aircraft, where the Warsaw Treaty has a larger number than NATO and ignores the sea-based aircraft where NATO has a 1,630 to 692 advantage. However, Bush was forced to postpone a decision to modernise NATO's SNF weapons in Europe until 1992 when negotiations may be opened with the Soviet Union on SNF reductions. Whatever happens in 1992, though, imperialism is determined to keep its nuclear weapons as the NATO summit's closing communique made clear, 'Where nuclear forces are concerned, land, sea and air-based systems, including ground-based missiles, in the present circumstances and as far as can be foreseen, will be needed in Europe. ■

Sri Lanka threatens India

TREVOR RAYNE

President Premadasa has called for the complete withdrawal of all Indian troops from the island by the second anniversary of the 'Peace Agreement' on 29 July. His Foreign Minister even threatened the use of force to expel them. Gandhi will not remove his occupation army; to do so would be a humiliation and blow to India's claim to be a regional super-power.

In a tactical move the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam reached an agreement with Premadasa to end hostilities with Sri Lankan forces and to call for the removal of the Indian Army. Premadasa hopes to drain support away from the Sinhalese JVP. At the same time martial law restrictions, curfews and shoot on

sight policies have been imposed with accompanying draconian censorship. The south is virtually beyond government control.

Gandhi is faced with a dangerous dilemma. Should his troops stay there is a risk that his Sri Lankan government ally will sink in economic chaos and frustrated Sinhalese chauvinism. Should they depart his EPRLF stooge administration in the Tamil areas is too weak to resist the Tigers. Currently, Indian troops are training 4500 Tamil youths on the mainland as a prop to their puppets. In two years the mighty Indian Army has been unable to beat the Tigers. There is no possibility that the additional five battalions drafted in in June will have any more success. Indeed they are in danger of becoming the target of Sinhalese guns. ■

Partners in crime

CAT WIENER

For anti-apartheid activists, de Klerk's recent visit to Thatcher provoked an inevitable sense of déjà vu. Five years ago PW Botha came here promising reform, saying that white South Africa must adapt or die. But in reality hundreds of thousands of black South Africans died during Botha's 11 year rule of terror: 15,000 - 27,000 black children died of malnutrition, thousands of political activists were arrested, tortured and detained under harsh Emergency regulations; the press was censored and black political organisations banned. Parliamentary reform continued to deny a vote to the black majority. FW de Klerk is offering the same recipe.

FW de Klerk's real intention in visiting Europe is to summon international aid for South Africa's ailing economy. Over the last five years externally and internally pressure has mounted against South Africa. The resistance and unrest provoked by Botha's policies means that South Africa is no longer such an attractive investment proposition for international capital. Public pressure has forced Western governments to impose sanctions which, in spite of flagrant breaches (British trade with South Africa has increased), have ensured South Africa's increasing isolation internationally and the ruin of their economy. It is vital for South Africa to re-enter the imperialist old boys' club.

De Klerk has promised that in five years he will have reformed apartheid and moved far along the peaceful path to a non-racial and democratic South Africa. But what democracy? While promoting 'group rights' to anyone who is listening abroad, de Klerk has made it absolutely clear that majority rule is not on the agenda. 'Group rights' are designed to protect white privilege. The brutal reality is that the State of Emergency has been imposed for its fourth year. In de Klerk's South Africa, arrests and detentions continue apace, and 274 people wait on Death Row.

None of this bothers Thatcher, apartheid's longstanding business partner and ally. She is clear-sighted about the way forward for capitalism in southern Africa and keen to be seen as the architect of change in that region

(see FRFI 86, centre page); all she requires are a few concessions with which to appease international opinion. The release of Mandela, in particular, would make a spectacular trophy for her to hang on the wall. Thatcher and Botha have made a deal, to rehabilitate apartheid internationally so as better to rob the dispossessed masses of South Africa and pocket the profits. The stakes may have shifted since 1984, but the greed of the imperialists remains the same.

What has changed is the response by the anti-apartheid movement in this country. Of course there were protests against de Klerk: the AAM and City AA organised pickets, anti-apartheid activists were arrested for throwing paint at de Klerk's car as he left Downing Street, slogans and red paint was sprayed over de Klerk's hotel. The Convenor of City AA was arrested during a protest outside the South African embassy and the singers of Her Majesty's Theatre refused to perform for apartheid's ambassador. But compared to the thousands who marched against Botha's visit in 1984, mere handfuls turned out to oppose de Klerk's and Thatcher's dirty deals.

For the AAM, it was too little, far too late. After thirty years, their failure to build an anti-apartheid movement in this country that has any impact can only be seen as the shameful result of their sectarian campaigning.

For thirty years the AAM and its Labour Party masters have supported only one section of the liberation movement and denied a voice to its other representatives, seeking to pre-determine the future of South Africa in time-honoured colonial style. It was this position

in relation to Zimbabwe which contributed to the imposition of the Lancaster House settlement on the newly liberated country, and allowed Thatcher to claim it as her victory.

For thirty years the Labour Party/AAM have censored and restricted the voice of the black working class of South Africa and their natural allies, communists and the oppressed sections of the working class here in Britain, those who have a real interest in seeing the overthrow of capitalism in southern Africa. The Labour leaders do not want to see a socialist revolution in South Africa any more than Thatcher does. There will be little credible resistance to the Thatcher/de Klerk plot from this quarter.

And so we saw a meagre 600 people march to a rally in Waterloo, where homeless people found themselves pushed aside in favour of something that was, to them, simply a struggle thousands of miles away. The AAM will never make the connection: that is part and parcel of their failure. What is needed is a movement that can make precisely that connection between the struggle of the oppressed in this country and the South African freedom struggle. Only such a movement, built amongst those who have nothing to lose and everything to gain from the victory of the working class in South Africa, can ever hope to prevent the imperialists from imposing their settlement.

In 1984-85 it was the black masses in the townships who exposed the sham of Botha's 'reforms'. It is they who are the key to future of South Africa. Our task is to aid that struggle. ■



FW de Klerk - Thatcher's new partner in crime

Tseko Simon Nkoli visits Non-Stop Picket

NICKI RENSTEN

On 13 July Tseko Simon Nkoli, who was acquitted last November in the Delmas treason trial, visited the Non-Stop Picket of the South African Embassy and spoke about his experiences to members of City AA, the RCG, OLGA and Kings Cross Women's Centre. Tseko Simon Nkoli was arrested on 23 September 1984 and tried for treason along with

21 others. After a two year court-case, five were sentenced to jail terms of five to eleven years. An application for bail pending appeal was rejected and they return to court on 24 August. Nkoli thanked activists for their support and called on them to continue fighting for the five to go free.

Nkoli is a gay activist as well as a fighter against apartheid. City of London Anti-Apartheid Group's Lesbian and Gay group has consistently campaigned for

his release and, together with gay activists such as Peter Tat-chell and organisations like OLGA, has mobilised regular pickets to highlight his case.

Speaking of the trial period, Nkoli pointed out that the regime deliberately tried members of the UDF and AZAPO together in the hope that disputes would arise. They were wrong: a meeting was called between the two organisations who ensured that they stood united against the apartheid state! ■

SOUTH AFRICA NEWS NOTES

REGIME FUELS NEGOTIATIONS SPECULATION

● It has been announced that on Wednesday 5 July Nelson Mandela of the ANC visited PW Botha, State President of South Africa. This has fuelled considerable speculation on the possibility of Mandela's release predicted to take place shortly after the white-only elections of September.

Mandela has played an increasingly public role since his transfer to Viktor Verster prison last year. In the last few months he has written to Inkatha leader Chief Buthelezi pressing for peace between ANC and Inkatha supporters. His visit to PW Botha was interpreted by sections of the press and government as a move towards negotiation with the regime.

The visit and Mandela's statement issued through the prison department drew responses from the ANC in Lusaka which disclaimed any role for Mandela as an independent negotiator for the ANC. The SACC expressed deep concern that the visit took place at a time when the regime is still 'investigating' Winnie Mandela's connection with the death of Stompie Moeketsi. 'It is our view that the government has an ace up its sleeve, namely the Stompie issue. While Mr Mandela was speaking to PW Botha, the police were raiding his original [Soweto] house'.

Meanwhile Mrs Thatcher was furthering the illusion that she has any progressive role to play in South Africa by meeting UDF representatives in London and promising to maintain the Commonwealth Eminent Persons' Group's proposals - none of which have been promoted since 1986. However Joe Modise of Umkhonto we Sizwe stated: 'Those who say it is time for a settlement with the regime are misreading the situation. Only the armed struggle will bring the Boers to negotiations'.

Carol Brickley

UPINGTON 14 MUST NOT HANG

● 14 of the Upington 26, black South Africans convicted on the infamous doctrine of 'common purpose' for the murder of a black policeman in Pabalello township, now await their fate on Death Row. There is no proof that they were on the scene at the time of the killing, only that they threw some stones at the house of the deceased. Those sentenced to death include an elderly couple with ten children. The lawyers of the 14 are seeking leave to appeal in a desperate attempt to save their lives. Such is the nature of 'justice' in de Klerk's South Africa. Cat Wiener

POVERTY IN HOWICK - DECADENCE IN WIMBLEDON

● The Wimbledon tournament is part and parcel of the suffering being experienced by 20,000 black people in one area of racist South Africa. Apart from supporting the participation of dozens of white South Africans in the event, it sold all the advertising rights to Slazenger, part of the British-based multi-national conglomerate BTR (British Tyre and Rubber). BTR were also the major equipment supplier at Wimbledon.

In May 1985, almost 1,000 workers were sacked from the BTR Sarmcol factory near Howick, Natal, following a lawful 2-day strike to gain recognition for their union MAWU (now NUMSA). Their strike is now the longest in South African history. Since the start of the fight, strike leaders have been abducted and murdered by vigilantes, South African police have waded into picket lines, and 20,000 dependants of the strikers are living in dire poverty.

Gary Rose
Further information from NUMSA Campaign Supporters Network.
PO Box 328, Cambridge, CB1 3RQ.

Haughey comes unstuck

MAXINE WILLIAMS

The Twenty Six County electorate delivered its verdict on Charles Haughey's Fianna Fail government when it failed to give Haughey the majority he needed to form a government in the June general election. Haughey's party lost four seats and the Progressive Democrat Party slumped to 5.6 per cent giving them 6 seats. However the right-wing PD party now holds the balance of power and it is with them that Haughey has made a deal to form a coalition.

The programme for this government will no doubt be as anti-working class as that of its predecessor.

Unemployment, emigration, drastic cuts in public services and extraditions have shown the Irish people that Fianna Fail offers no future. Clearly seeking an alternative, a section of the electorate turned to the Irish Labour Party and the Workers Party who both made significant gains. The Labour Party has 15 seats and the viciously anti-Republican Workers Party has seven. The same trend was shown in the Euro-elections

when the leader of the Workers Party topped the poll in Dublin.

Sinn Fein was disappointed by both the national and the Euro-elections. Sinn Fein did not win any increase in support in the national elections although it did increase its vote in some areas such as Cavan/Monaghan. In the Euro-elections Sinn Fein's vote in the South fell by 4,730. However two anti-extradition independents did well: Neil Blaney was elected to Strasbourg and Fr. Patrick Ryan, vilified in the British press, won 31,000 votes, which is a remarkable performance. In the Six Counties Euro-elections Sinn Fein's vote fell to 9.2 per cent.

Sinn Fein's results have led to a predictable chorus of glee both in Britain and Ireland. This chorus comes from those who have found Sinn Fein dangerous enough to ban it from media coverage, undoubtedly a factor in their reduced vote. Gerry Adams also pointed to the need in the Twenty Six Counties for 'political campaigning... on a daily basis' rather than just 'electioneering'. On the Euro elections in the Six Counties he said the party had been 'lethargic in many areas'. ■

Gibraltar revelations

MAXINE WILLIAMS

Yet more revelations from the Spanish police have shown that the British story at the Gibraltar inquest into the killings of Mairead Farrell, Dan McCann and Sean Savage, was an even bigger pack of lies than previously thought.

Spanish police have now said that the white Renault car, said by the British to have been driven into Gibraltar on Sunday 6 March by Savage, was in fact driven in on Saturday by someone else, not one of the three who died. The British have all along claimed that they shot the three because they thought the

white Renault might have contained a car bomb and the three might have had remote control devices.

The Spanish evidence shows this to be nonsense. Spanish police were aware that the Renault contained no bomb and the explosives were either in another car or in the car driven by the three to the Gibraltar border on 6 March. This car was left on the Spanish side of the border. The Spanish therefore knew and told the British that the explosives were not in Gibraltar. Yet another piece of the jigsaw has now been put in place and the picture it shows is murder. ■

British Terror

PAM ROBINSON

The past five weeks have seen continuing British repression in Ireland.

In late May, Patrick Docherty, 19, was hit in the face by a plastic bullet fired by a British soldier. He needed seventy stitches and suffered a smashed cheek bone, broken lower jaw and lost nine teeth. He will be scarred for life. A week later he was arrested by the RUC and held for 23 hours before being released without charge for refusing to drop his complaint about the plastic bullet incident.

On 6 June, Bobby McVarnock, 24, was stopped by soldiers, had his jacket, shoes and socks forcibly removed and was threatened: 'Tell your mates the Paras are in and we'll do as we fucking please. If any of our boys get hit we'll blow off your head'.

On 16 June loyalist band members attacked a 29 year old man in Antrim; the RUC told them he was a Catholic. They battered him with concrete blocks and

cut one of his fingers off.

On 27 June at 2am the RUC broke into the home of Des and Declan Murphy in South Armagh. Des had a gun pointed at his head whilst Declan was thrown down the stairs by his hair. They said they were looking for Des and Declan's father, Sinn Fein councillor Connor Murphy. They left after four hours having cut off the phone and thrown household goods around.

They went to Connor Murphy's farmhouse and destroyed animal feed, bales of hay and silage. Connor was arrested and taken to Castlereagh. Other homes in South Armagh were raided with their doors being sledgehammered and their occupants assaulted. Fourteen people were arrested and held at Castlereagh and Gough interrogation centres.

Finally, it has been announced that the British soldier who shot dead Aidan McAnespie has been given a token fine and returned to service with his regiment. ■

Black youth fightback in Dewsbury and Bradford

AURIEL FERMO

On Saturday 24 June in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, hundreds of Asian youths defended their community from British National Party (BNP) fascists, police and racists in the town. 1,200 riot and mounted police were drafted in. 59 arrests were made - the majority Asian youths.

The BNP march and counter-demonstration called by the Kirklees Black Workers Group had been banned by Douglas Hurd, but the rallies went ahead. Alex Fellowes of Dewsbury, ex Labour councillor and active anti-racist told us the background.

'Since the early days of the schools controversy (see *FRFI* 72) the BNP have wanted to get into the area and exploit racism here. There are quite a few of us who were very involved in opposing the racist Parents Campaign. We believe that there were strong alliances formed between some of the people organising the schools campaign and racist groups like the BNP and NF.'

'The Black Workers rally had gone ahead and been very successful and peaceful, there were over 100 people there. When the rally finished everyone left in

groups. If you were a black person in Dewsbury you were in danger of attack, so everyone made their way together up to the Town Hall.

'The BNP rally started at 2pm. Coach and train loads of BNP came into the area. There were a sizeable group of racists taunting black youths. There were racists hanging out of the windows shouting abuse at black people walking past.

'There were large number of counter-demonstrators organised and if the police hadn't been there to allow the BNP rally to take place, they wouldn't have been able to hold it. People in the area, black and white, wouldn't have let them.

'By what they were doing and saying the racists were constituting a breach of the peace. The police did nothing to stop this. Their response was to move in on the Asians. That was when Asians resisted. There were police in riot gear and on horses - it was like a running battle.'

Fascists surrounded the Asian youth chanting 'siege heil'. It was at this point that Superintendent Neil Reece, demanded of his officers 'I want some arrests. You are authorised to make arrests'. Simultaneously, Asian youth attacked the Scarborough pub - a notoriously racist pub that has

held NF meetings in the past.' Alex told us what the response of the Labour Council had been to the BNP rally:

'The Labour Council in Kirklees has never had a very good record in opposing racism. When they found out that the BNP rally was taking place they didn't go overboard in opposing it and pulling out all the stops to prevent it. I feel that the racism stirred up over the Salman Rushdie demonstrations has allowed people in authority to legitimise fascists and racist groups holding rallies.

'But we are organised here. The Black Workers Group is well organised. If there are more racist rallies like this, then the anti-racist organisations will grow stronger. The fight back comes from the black community and is supported by white anti-racists and there are a lot of us.'

Defend the Dewsbury 59, Kirklees Black Workers Group, c/o South Kirklees Community Relations Council, Huddersfield. **Public Meeting:** 28 July, Dewsbury Town Hall, 7.30pm. For more information contact Khalid 0422 57257 ext 3057

■ On Sunday 9 July a group of 20 to 30 white racists viciously attacked 14-year-old Goharremah Ali in West Bowling, Bradford.

This was the third attack in as many weeks. FRFI comrades spoke with the Asian youth who live in the area.

Two weeks before, Khani had been attacked by racists carrying metal bars and knives. 'They were well organised and shouting "Salman! Salman!" to taunt me. I was alone, they surrounded me, and tried to stab my face, but I protected it with my hand.' Later another youth, Ali, was hit with an iron bar.

The 9 July attack was sudden. 'The streets were quiet with a few kids out playing. The racists came in loaded with bricks and bottles.' Car windows were smashed and the local shop attacked, the owner hailed with bricks.

The police arrived 35 minutes after the first of many phone calls. By then the Asian youth had grouped together and the racists had run off. Local and national media reported the police story that officers arrived four minutes after the first call. The police insist that there are no organised racist groups involved.

But the Asian youth at West Bowling are very clear that British National Party racists were involved in the attacks. They said the police moved into their community in riot gear with dogs that were let loose.

Idris was pushed along and told by the officer 'get a move on, you fucking cunt'. 'The attitude of the police is very bad. The community lives here together peacefully, Asian, white, Afro-Caribbean. The racists came in from outside. ■



Police raid in Heathtown

ADAM SHERWOOD

On Tuesday 23 May the British media claimed that 500 local youths had rioted in Heathtown, Wolverhampton, following a drugs operation involving 120 police. 250 police responded to the uprising. Later interviews and coverage on *Central's Midlands Today* focussed on the danger to Britain of the cocaine derivative 'crack'.

On 31 May 200 residents attended a meeting to refute the lies of the police and media and to show that only some 30-40 youths were involved. The following day Geoffrey Dear, chief constable of the West Midlands constabulary lowered his estimates of those involved.

Over 200 statements have been collected to disprove the police version of events. The media reports have admitted eighteen arrests, twelve of which are for 'drugs-related offences'. The police admit to 56 relevant arrests and 36 people charged. The local defence campaign claims that this is an underestimation.

Many people have been subjected to the raiding of their homes; and the boarding of windows subsequent to this is conspicuous on the local estate.

Following these raids, keys to flats have been confiscated and many people banned from their estate under bail conditions. This action of removing keys to people's homes when many have nothing but the clothes they stand in has been carried out by Wolverhampton's council under police direction. ■

Black leader acquitted in Mangrove frame-up

KAYA

After a trial at Knightsbridge Crown Court which lasted six weeks Frank Critchlow, black community leader and owner of the Mangrove, was acquitted of four serious charges.

The case against Frank Critchlow must have been judged by the jury to be unfounded and a blatant conspiracy by the notorious B Division based at Notting Hill police station.

On the night of 20 May 1988 the Mangrove club, on All Saints Road, Ladbroke Grove was raided by Thatcher's uniformed thugs. The raid was carefully planned by senior officers; it is obvious both from the raid itself and officers' admissions during the court case that Frank was under surveillance. Less than ten minutes after he entered

the Club it was surrounded and the police hacked down the doors. Frank, the main target, was pounced on, and the officers, whilst sitting on Frank's back, photographed him in possession of planted heroin and cannabis. Unfortunately for them, the time recorded on the photo did not match their statements. Eight others were also planted with drugs but not photographed, seven of them have been acquitted.

Frank was charged with possession of both drugs and with intent to supply. He spent 13½ months on bail conditions designed to prevent him from being part of the community, and aimed at bankrupting him and destroying his business. The conditions excluded him from going within 500 yards of All Saints Road.

Last year's attack on Frank

and the Mangrove was nothing new. Since the early 1970s he has been constantly harassed, 'You could say that from this time right up to the early '80s I was on bail from one charge to another.' He has faced three serious charges relating to drugs, a common weapon used against black people, and in each case found not guilty.

When interviewed by *FRFI*, Frank highlighted the need for the police to be accountable to the whole community, 'This last case served to politicise a large section of our community. Throughout the case I received tremendous support.' Frank's message is that it is up to the people to change things. It is hopeless to rely on black politicians who have failed miserably when dealing with the most important issues, in this instance, the police versus the people.

Frank Critchlow and the Mangrove will continue to work with the community. They are now campaigning for the removal of those high ranking officers responsible for this and countless other attacks on the black community. ■

Crisis of Socialism in China

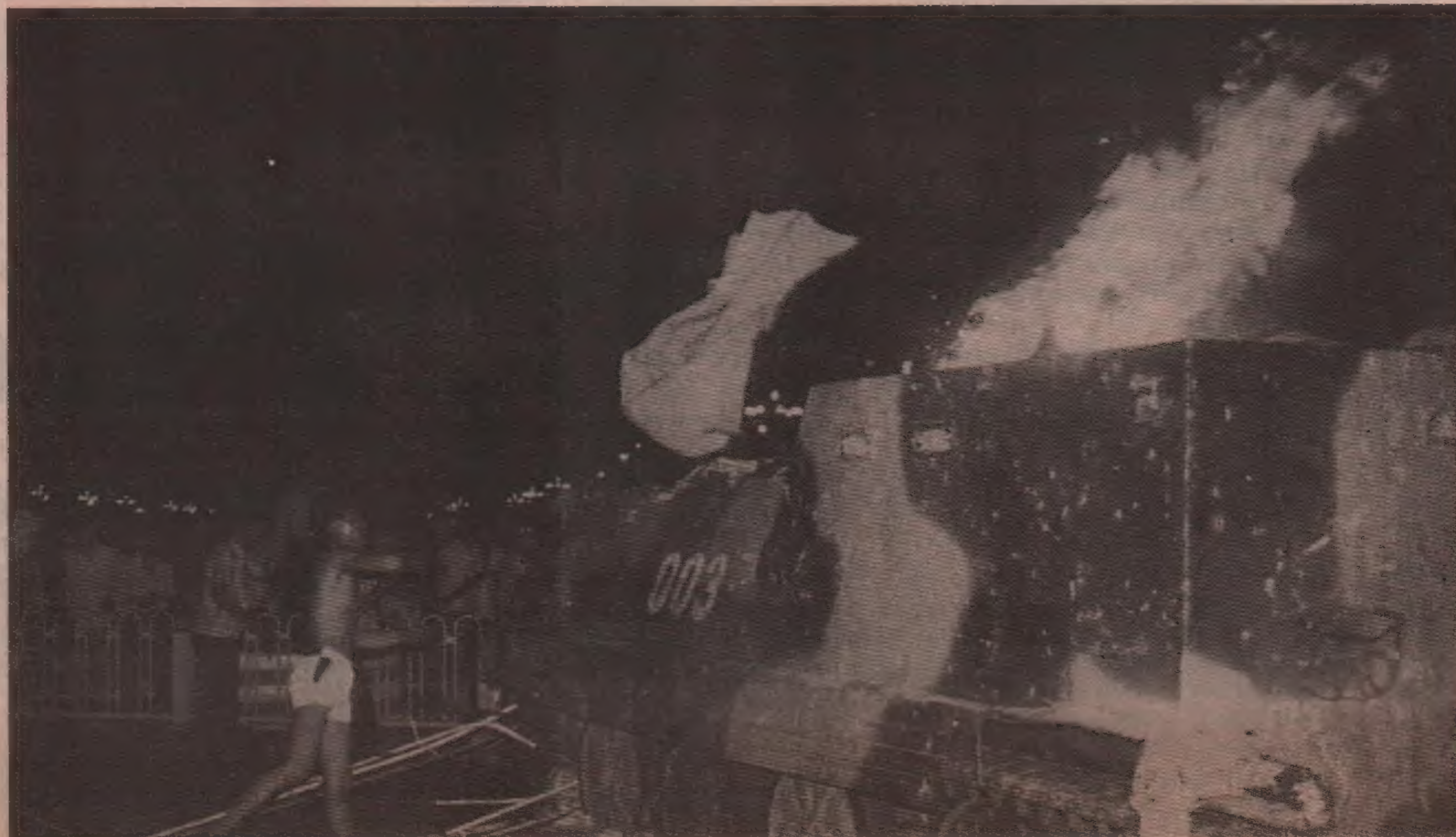
'Between cities, messages fly through fax machines in friendly offices, and the latest stories in US and European newspapers arrive within hours. Shortwave broadcasts of the Voice of America...beam news reports in Chinese. Hotel satellite dishes draw down...virtually all the major US network news shows. When one US professor went to take a look at demonstrators a student greeted him with this question 'How much play is ABC News giving us?' The Wall Street Journal 30 May.

As communists we strongly criticise the indiscriminate shooting of Chinese people that took place in Beijing on 3-4 June. The People's Liberation Army operation was an expression of the crisis of communism in China, and of the failure of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to give leadership in the struggle for socialism. It threatens to undermine the Chinese people's support for the socialist system.

The path of reform introduced by Deng Xiaoping has reduced state ownership of the means of production and distribution, diminished the role of planning in the economy, and removed the state monopoly of foreign trade. Chinese foreign policy has often been opportunistically nationalistic: supporting counter-revolutionaries in Afghanistan and Kampuchea, attacking socialist Vietnam, and favouring US imperialism against the Soviet Union. The result of these violations of socialist principles has been the exacerbation of class differences in Chinese society, the elevation of the market and profit motive in directing resources, and the diminution of socialist class consciousness and education. In particular, urban Chinese youth have been encouraged by the Chinese government's policies to value capitalist commodity culture above service to the liberation of the working class and humanity.

Unlike much of the British left *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* does not glorify the student movement. The students' demands for democracy, a free press, human rights and an end to corruption were abstract and given no specific working class content (see *FRFI* 87). There was no evidence of students criticising Deng's reformist programme from a revolutionary perspective, and no evidence, beyond the singing of the Internationale, of their solidarity with the struggles of the world's oppressed: Palestine, South Africa, El Salvador etc. Rather, they identified with Solidarity in Poland. It is clear that counter-revolutionaries took leading positions in the student movement, and are now in refuge with imperialism in Hong Kong and the USA. Several student organisations had links with pro-Kuomintang groups based in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the USA, and received funds from them. A record 40,000 Chinese students are studying in the USA: half from the People's Republic, half from Taiwan. Contacts have been manipulated by imperialism. Fang Lizhi, a leading ideologue of the student movement, openly anti-Marxist, said to a gathering earlier this year that he hoped 'that entrepreneurs, as China's new rising force, will join with the advanced intellectuals to fight for democracy'. Calls for a multi-party system and the downfall of the CPC emerged in the student movement. Until two years ago Fang, now sheltering in the US embassy in Beijing, was a CPC member.

Nevertheless, a million people filed through Tiananmen Square in mid-May: workers, soldiers, and CPC members among them. Deng's reforms inevitably generated two tendencies in the student movement: one anti-socialist, demanding the political changes that would allow an acceleration of capitalist restoration; the other, representative of the victims of this process, the working class and poorer peasants, opposed to the growing manifestations of capitalism - inflation, corruption, inequalities, etc. These two trends surfaced within the leadership of the CPC, together with a group even to the right of Deng around former General Secretary Zhao Ziyang. Their dispute paralysed the Party and worsened the confusion among students and workers alike. With no clear political line, the student movement was in danger of falling into the hands of counter-revolution. The imperialist media in-



Students attack PLA tank

tervened with rumour and distortion. When the PLA acted it was met with fierce resistance, many soldiers were brutally killed. That it had to act at all is testimony to the paralysis and confusions in the CPC. Some 300-700 civilians were killed, not the several thousands that the imperialist media originally claimed.

On 13 June premier Li Peng announced that China's economic and foreign policies would not change. The PLA's demonstration of military power will not be enough to shore-up socialism. There is a very great danger that counter-revolution will flourish both within and without the CPC if past policies are continued.

CHINA'S 'OPEN DOOR'

When the Polish government bloodlessly instituted martial law in 1981 imperialism responded vehemently with wide-ranging sanctions. When it comes to China in 1989 Bush and Thatcher, promoters of death squads in Central America and Ireland, mouth a few hypocritical criticisms and proceed with business as usual. Capital is making a large investment in China; Deng Xiaoping opened the door for it in 1978 with the Four Modernisations programme.

Eighty per cent of China's 1.1 billion people are peasants. Socialism requires a high level of development of the productive forces and a productivity beyond that achieved by capitalism. For as long as capital has a higher productivity its cheap commodities represent a threat to the development of socialist production. They provide a potential material base for a counter-revolutionary alliance between wealthier peasants, the petit-bourgeois and bourgeois elements in society with imperialism. Against this must be state control of trade, and an alliance of the working class and poor and middle peasants under the leadership of the communist party.

When the Soviet Union launched its planned economy in 1928 its steel output was 3.3 times that of China in 1952, its oil output 29 times greater. China had four times as many people, but produced only twice as much grain. Building socialism under such



Democracy or reaction in Tiananmen Square?

conditions was a tremendous problem, compounded by the sheer weight of peasant agriculture in the economy and the Chinese break with the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. Chairman Mao Zedong's solution, promoted during the Great Leap Forward 1957-59, and the Cultural Revolution 1966-76, was to collectivise agriculture, reduce income differentials in industry and place 'politics in command' - encourage the poor peasants, working class and students to struggle against bourgeois privilege. Collectivised farming would free labour for industrialisation and construction, and industry would develop at a pace determined by the modernisation of farming. Opposing Mao were those he dubbed 'the number one and two capitalist roaders': Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. For Liu and Deng collectivisation was unthinkable before agriculture was mechanised. Decollectivisation would accelerate development. At the same time emphasis should be placed on building heavy industry and the use of material incentives. Both lines face the same problem: how can enough surplus be accumulated to allow industrial in-

vestment without forcing down the level of peasant consumption, and thereby threatening the peasant-worker alliance that maintains the socialist state?

Deng's Four Modernisations (science and technology, agriculture, industry and national defence) are designed to make China a leading industrial nation by the year 2000. They have involved the decollectivisation of agriculture, encouragement of private plots, the introduction of capitalist management techniques and hierarchies in industry, productivity bonus schemes, profit and loss accounting as measures of efficiency, the displacement of 'surplus labour', and the introduction of modern technology through monopoly capital investment. The importing of foreign capital was always an option for speeding up industrialisation. China's economy has grown at 11 per cent per annum since 1982. Its share of world trade has doubled to 1.6 per cent over ten years. However, 70 per cent of that trade is with imperialism; in the 1950s a similar proportion took place with the socialist countries. At the same time, US companies have invested \$4 billion in China, capital has poured in from Japan, West Germany and Hong Kong; Tootal, Pilkington, BSR, Cable and Wireless and a string of other British firms have investments. Today, state owned industries account for less than 64 per cent of industrial output compared with 83 per cent in 1978. Taxes recouped from state-owned concerns are now down 38 per cent on 1988 revenues. Investment in agriculture fell from 11.1 per cent of total spending in 1979 to 3.4 per cent in 1985.

State control of the economy is weakening. Inevitably, capitalism has spontaneously reasserted itself with unemployment, inflation, now at 30 per cent, impoverishment and cuts in welfare expenditures alongside grotesque inequalities and luxury consumption.

CAPITALIST MAYHEM

'People regard a job as a taxi driver as better than that of a doctor, not because egalitarian principles operate in China, but because a taxi driver

earns more than a doctor or a university lecturer'. (*New Scientist* 3 June)

As central government deficits increase provincial government revenues have grown as regional disparities increase, particularly between the wealthier coastal region and poorer mountainous interior. Four special economic zones for capitalist investment have been established. In Guangdong, which neighbours Hong Kong, up to 1 million workers are supplied to government agencies to 60,000 Hong Kong based companies. Young women employed by these firms earn twice the pay of a worker in a state enterprise, but half that paid by the same firm to its employees in Hong Kong. Capital appears as a source of prosperity. Hong Kong dollars are widely used throughout Guangdong. Laws modelled on those used in Japan and the USA have been introduced to regulate labour: job security has been removed for many workers; bankruptcy and taxation laws have been imported from Hong Kong; as have the customary practices of bribery under invoicing and buying and selling of shares as a means of extracting a portion of surplus value without working oneself.

While luxury consumption has increased, education has been starved of funds. Almost 35 per cent of people over fifteen are illiterate or semi-literate. Teachers go unpaid while hotels and golf-courses are built. A state employed architect, doctor or engineer is likely to earn around £200 a month. A market stall-holder selling produce from a private plot earns fifteen times as much, and twenty-five times as much as a teacher. The young women employed by an electronics transnational in Guangdong will get about twice as much as the state doctor. University places go vacant, people do not train as doctors. Children are leaving school below the minimum age of fifteen to work on their family plots. Richer peasants buy up rights to work additional land, hire the labour of poorer or dispossessed peasants and spend their fortunes on imported capitalist luxuries. This alliance between a section of the population and imperialism is real and it extends into the CPC itself! Little wonder the communist party officials have referred to themselves as running a 'South Korean economic model'. Zhao Ziyang, favoured by the students, was chief proponent of the Guangdong project.

What were intended as joint Chinese state-foreign capital ventures are becoming solely imperialist capital operations; joint enterprises supposed to last for several years are extending into several decades. Chinese labour increasingly produces for the capitalist market while transnationals freely exploit Chinese consumption; profits made by transnationals are entirely remitted to the imperialist heartlands.

'Black cat, white cat, who can catch what colour cat, as long as it catches the mice', Deng Xiaoping once said when asked about encouraging private enterprise as a means of development. The student protest must indicate to the CPC the dangers of trying to build socialism with capitalist methods: it cannot be done. The increasingly capitalist content of Chinese society threatens to destroy the socialist form. China's working class is now an enormous 130 million strong. Unless revolutionary communists in the CPC win back the confidence of the working class and mobilises its democratic demands for power, education, health care and higher living standards against the beneficiaries of Deng's policies the barrier against imperialism, the socialist state served as, is in great peril. It was won in 1949 after 20 million Chinese workers and peasants had died fighting the imperialist armies and their Kuomintang stooges. Imperialism will gladly shed another 20 million Chinese lives if it can achieve counter-revolution. ■



The French Revolution of 1789-1814 was a classic bourgeois revolution in which the then progressive bourgeoisie destroyed, by revolutionary means, a decaying and reactionary feudal ruling class which had become an obstacle to the further development of humanity.

EDDIE ABRAHAMS looks at its significance for revolutionaries today.

The communist movement drawing, as it does, on all that is progressive in human history studies the French Revolution as a rich source of lessons for the working class's struggle for socialism. The revolution furnishes us with irrefutable confirmations of historical materialism and confirms the historical necessity of revolution to effect the transition from a decaying social and economic order to a more advanced and progressive one.

Today, on its 200th anniversary, a study of the French Revolution is particularly necessary. In this period of ideological reaction, bourgeois and opportunist 'theoreticians' are claiming that the revolution, and the Jacobin terror in particular, were accidental developments not truly necessary for progress. In dozens of articles and books, they are desperately trying to prove that reform, not revolution, compromise with, and not struggle against, the old feudal ruling class was the only civilised way forward. For these ruling class apologists, the French revolutionary experience was a tragic and bitter aberration brought about by bloodthirsty and uncompromising extremists.

Such views are being peddled by reactionaries as part of the current offensive against Marxism. They are designed to banish any conception of revolution and the dictatorship of the oppressed majority as necessary conditions for human progress. By so doing, they want, in particular, to remove socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the oppressed working class from today's political agenda. Defending the rich revolutionary heritage of the French Revolution is today, therefore, an integral part of the defence of Marxism against its opportunist and reactionary opponents.

PRELUDE TO THE REVOLUTION

In pre-revolutionary France the landed aristocracy - the nobility - a tiny minority of 400,000 out of a total population of about 23 million, constituted the ruling class. By 1789 however, it had ceased to be the major economic class having been outstripped by the rapidly growing bourgeoisie which was making its fortunes in the slave trade, international commerce and increasingly in industry.

As the bearer of a new higher mode of production (capitalism) the bourgeoisie resented feudal restrictions on its social, economic and political ambitions. It sustained the extravagant lifestyle of the court and the aristocracy, but had no control over its expenses. It was excluded from the army's officer corps and the highest posts in government and the Church - all of which were reserved for the nobility. Most importantly it objected to the numerous internal tolls, local monopolies and other obstacles to the development of capitalism, of trade and manufacture.

Full of self-confidence the bourgeoisie fought to assert its own rights and put itself at the head of society. Abbé Sieyès in his famous pamphlet *What is the Third Estate?* denounced the feudal ruling class as unproductive. It 'devoured' wealth 'but plays no part in anything to bring it about'. Barnave, fully conscious of the bourgeoisie's historic mission

wrote, with great precision, in 1792: 'Once the arts and commerce had penetrated the people and created new means of wealth with the help of the labouring classes, they prepared a revolution in the political laws, a new distribution of wealth produces a new distribution of power. In the same ways that the possession of lands raised the aristocracy, industrialised property raised the powers of the people.'

The revolutionary bourgeoisie spoke in the name of the people (they were, along with the peasantry, the urban petit-bourgeoisie and the workers part of the Third Estate, the nobility constituting the First and the Clergy the Second) but by no means represented them.

As the landed aristocracy declined it, like today's declining imperialist ruling class, viciously intensified its exploitation. It revived up to 300 different kinds of seigneurial dues and privileges reducing millions of peasants to a state of penury and starvation. Pressed on the one side by the nobility, the mass of peasantry was facing expropriation by the rise of capitalist farmers on the other side who were also enclosing hitherto communal land.

In the great cities of Paris, Lyons, Marseilles the sans-culotte - the urban petit-bourgeoisie, artisans and workers - lived in dire poverty servicing both nobility and bourgeoisie. Having as their main concern earning enough to feed themselves they had no love for the rich bourgeois who never lacked steak on their table and never missed a chance to do deals with the nobility. Fired by a revolutionary egalitarianism and by the most advanced political principles of its day, the sans-culottes were throughout the revolutionary decade its driving force - a force without which even the most resolute of bourgeois revolutionaries would not have been able to prevail.

THE REVOLUTION - STAGE ONE: THE BOURGEOIS COMPROMISE

The contradictions between the classes came to a head in 1789. The Government was bankrupt. It sought to raise finances by cutting court costs and imposing a land tax and stamp duty. This was rejected by the nobility. Between them, Brienne and Necker, the Courts finance ministers, failed to resolve the problem as the bourgeoisie too was refusing to advance loans without greater political power and representation. As two bad harvests raised food prices leading to riots the situation was becoming critical.

The Court therefore prepared to convene the Estates General bringing together the three Estates - the nobility (the Second Estate), the clergy (First Estate) and all other classes (bourgeoisie, peasantry, petit-bourgeois, workers were all considered part of the Third Estate). In preparation for the Estates General the bourgeoisie put forward its revolutionary democratic demands: freedom of speech, writing, assembly and organisation. It, in addition demanded the removal of all restrictions on its rights to accumulate capital and an end to privileges for the nobility.

Though the demands of the sans-culotte and the peasantry were hardly represented they by and large supported the bourgeoisie whose political demands were progressive.

When Estates General met on 5 May 1789, the Court insisted that voting take place by Estate and not individually. Thus it hoped to ensure that the Third Estate (representing 23 million people) would be automatically outvoted by an alliance of the First (representing 135,000 people) and Second (400,000 people) Estates. The bourgeoisie was having none of this. It represented the majority. Confident of its power and the backing of the masses it seized the initiative. On 17 June it constituted itself the National Assembly.

Thus opened a period of dual power and revolutionary clashes. When the Royal Council closed its meeting place, the Third Estate took refuge in some tennis courts and there took their famous Tennis Court Oaths not to disperse until a constitution was established.

By the beginning of July France was in the grip of popular uprisings in the cities and in the countryside. On 14 July, the masses stormed the Bastille in search of arms while in the countryside the peasantry launched attacks on feudal property. With the National Assembly supported by the insurrectionary mass movement the Crown forces could do nothing. The mass movement had secured the defeat of the old regime.

Between 4 and 11 August 1789 the National Assembly abolished all feudal rights and privileges. On 27 August it adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man. To be sure, it was the rights of bourgeois man - it declared property inviolable and made no mention of slavery.

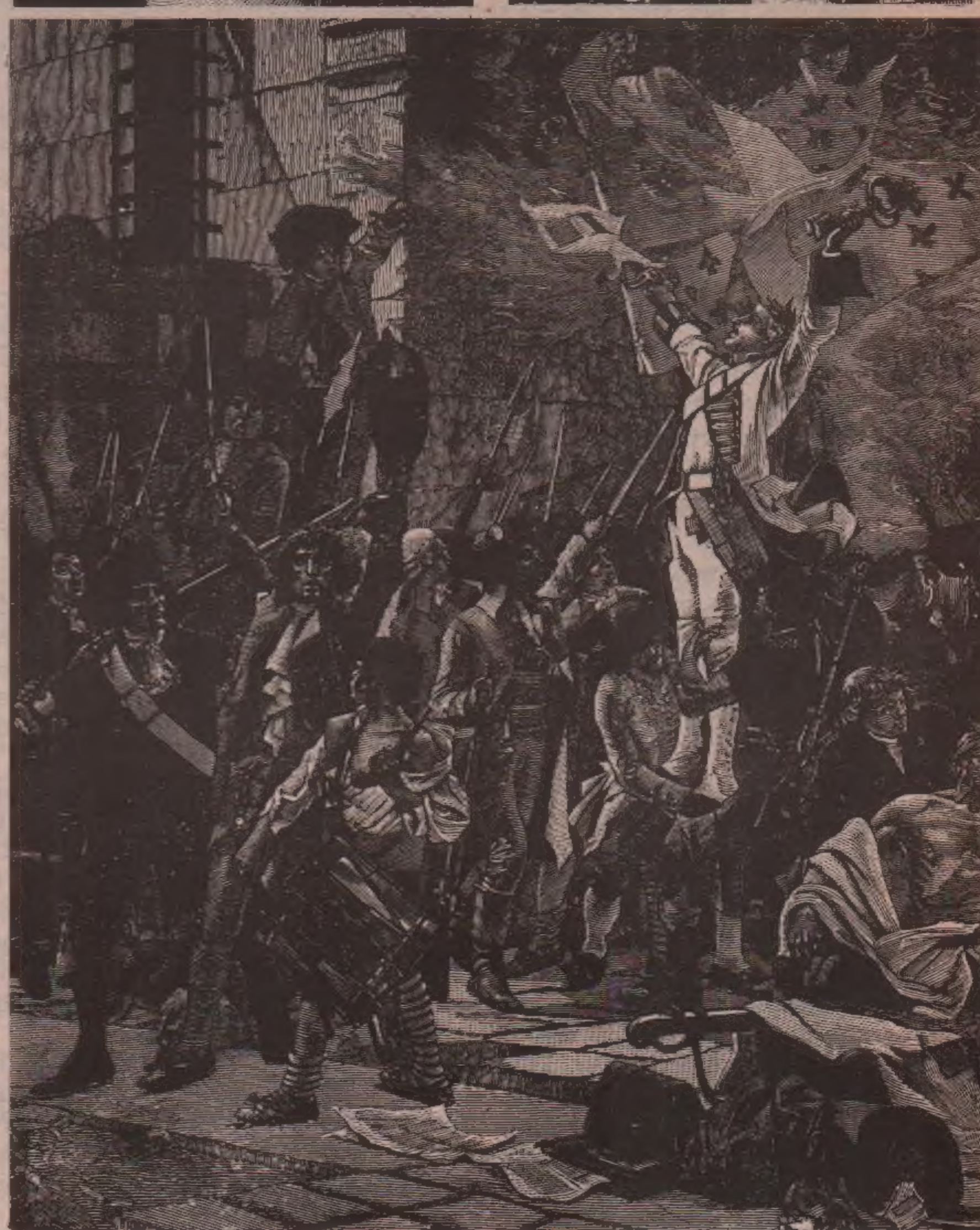
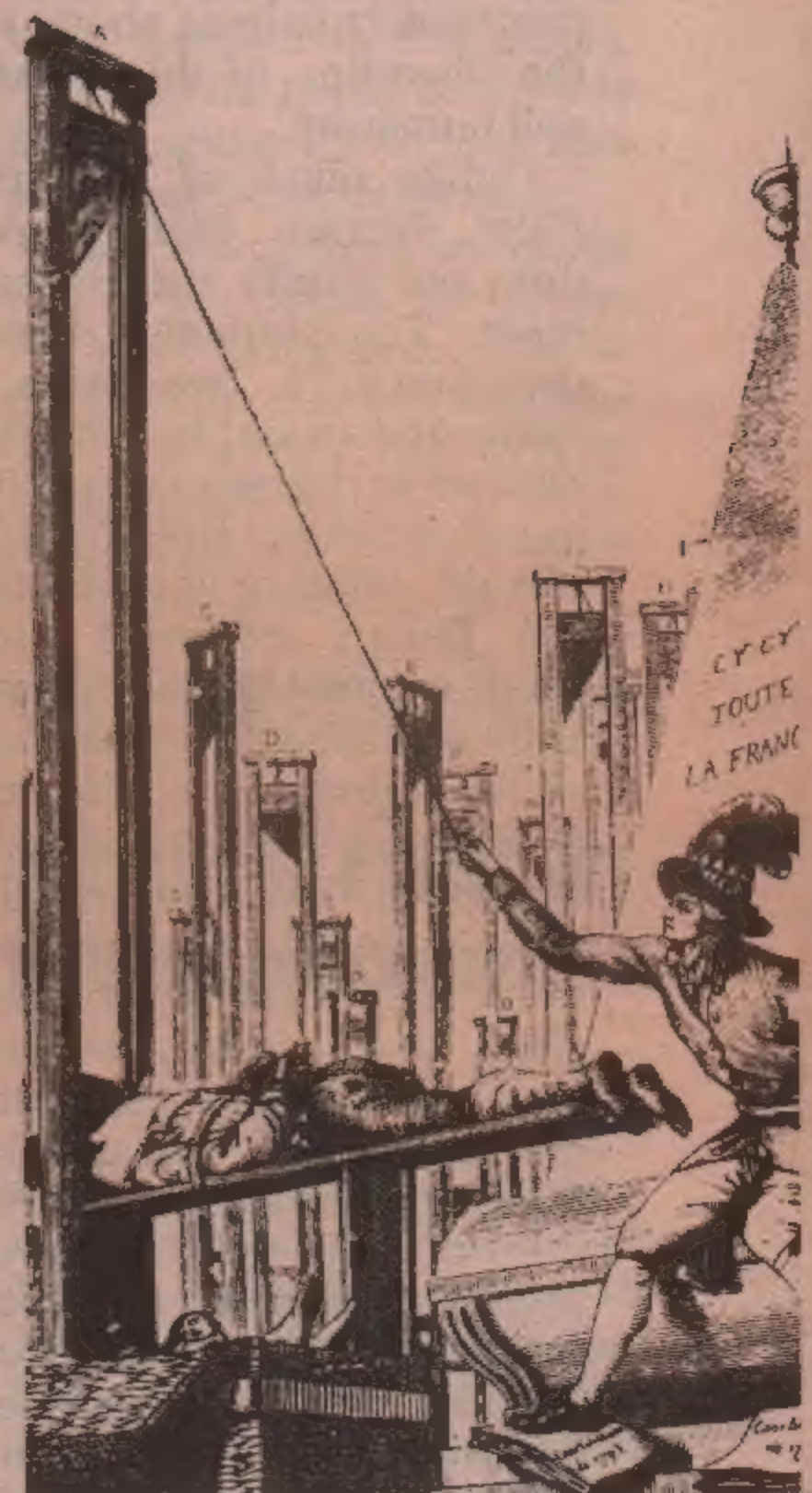
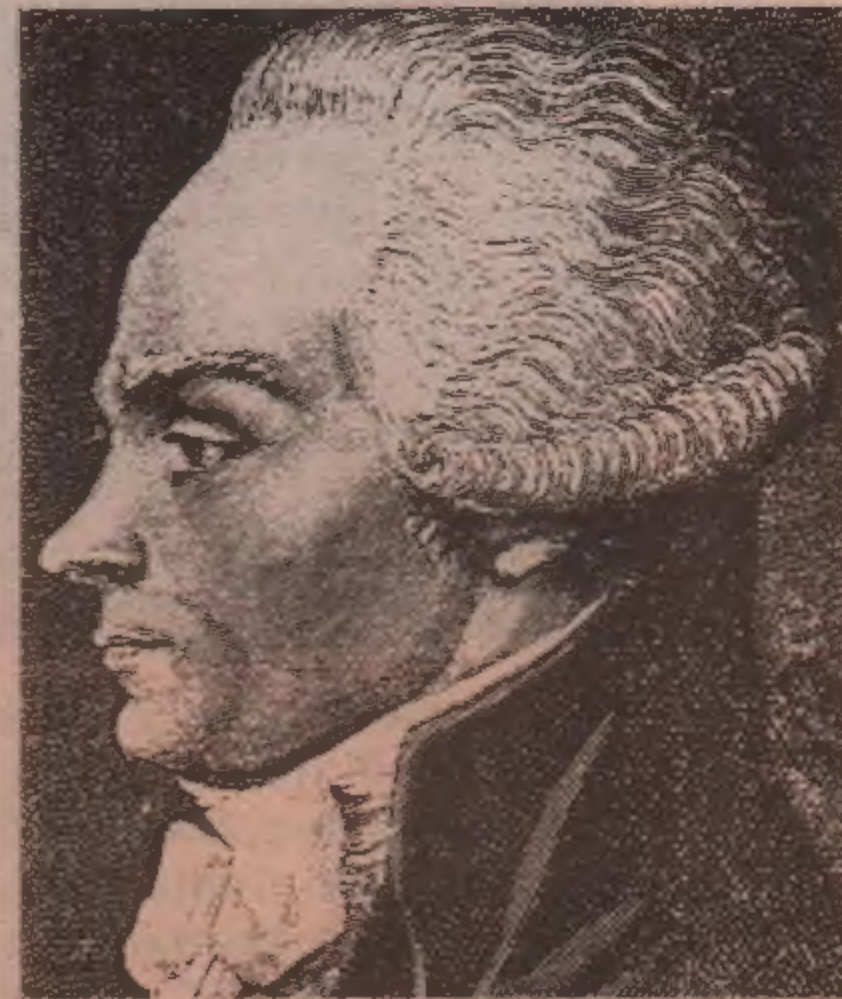
Robespierre, who was to emerge as leader of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, was a member of the 'Amis des Noirs' supporting freedom for slaves. He denounced those 'who urge the Rights of Man but believe in them so little that they have sanctified slavery.' During the Jacobin dictatorship, slavery was abolished in the French colonies. This move was inspired as much by the historic rising of Haiti's slaves led by Toussaint L'Ouverture as by the Jacobins themselves.

In the 18 months after August 1789 all hereditary offices were swept away, the hereditary nobility was abolished, the old judicial system scrapped and internal free trade introduced, along with unified weights and measures.

Immediately, the narrow and selfish class interests of the bourgeoisie came to the fore. Having come to power on the back of the mass movement, it moved to ensure that bourgeois rights to exploit and accumulate were not threatened by the masses. In June 1791 the bourgeoisie enacted the 'Le Chapelier Law' banning trade unions and strikes. To further strengthen their position against the peasantry and sans-culotte they consummated an alliance with the defeated nobility. In September 1791, the King swore allegiance to the new constitution which enshrined a Constitutional Monarchy.

Having overwhelmed the nobility with the aid of the masses, the

LIBER ÉGAL FRATER



LIBERTÉ ÉGALITÉ UNITÉ



LEFT: Robespierre, architect of the revolution. Below him, Marie Antoinette, criticised even by her oppressor mother for her dissolute lifestyle. **CENTRE:** A contemporary cartoon of Robespierre operating a succession of guillotines. The cartoonist was shortly executed. **BOVE:** The revolution brought dynamic changes in the Arts. David's portrait of a peasant woman. **BELOW:** The storming of the Bastille: one of many idealized views.



bourgeoisie was now content to leave things be. It was not willing to radically uproot the old regime. It was too fearful of unleashing the dispossessed peasantry and sans-culotte, who had gained nothing from the revolution. Representing the self-satisfied, fearful and compromising bourgeoisie Barnave writing in 1791 noted: 'One more step forward would be a fatal and criminal error. One more step forward to greater liberty would mean the destruction of the monarchy. One more step forward to greater equality would mean the destruction of property.'

THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

They did not however take into account the counter-revolution. Like the opportunists of today they proclaimed the virtues of reform and compromise and denounced revolutionary force. Like the opportunists of today, they did not count on the viciously reactionary character of decaying and historically bankrupt classes who stop at nothing to restore the wealth and privilege of a tiny minority.

As early as April 1790, the nobility was whipping up counter-revolution in the provinces. By the end of 1792, 60 out of France's 83 departments were in revolt against Paris. Meanwhile, the King who had sworn an oath of allegiance to the 1791 Constitution secretly promised to abrogate it. In Germany, Austria, Russia and England, the ruling classes terrified of the revolution, joined the French aristocratic refugees in a united front to destroy the revolution.

The war which France had begun in April 1792 to pre-empt a counter-revolutionary invasion after initial successes was going badly. By August 1792, allied troops were entering France.

The revolution was in danger! The bourgeoisie split.

The 'moderate', cowardly faction, the Gironde, ever ready to make compromises and alliances with the nobility was losing its position to the uncompromisingly revolutionary wing of the bourgeoisie, the Jacobins led by Robespierre. Unlike the Gironde, the Jacobins were prepared to unite with the sans-culotte to crush the nobility and external counter-revolution.

With the feudalists on the offensive, the mass movement once again took the initiative. Whilst the reaction plotted, 47 out of Paris's 48 sections called for the overthrow of the monarchy in August 1792. By September, the National Assembly unanimously voted for the overthrow of the monarchy. Under pressure of the mass movement the revolutionary bourgeoisie prepared to fight the counter-revolution. In January 1793, the King Louis XVI was executed. In March, a Revolutionary Tribunal was formed and in July the Committee of Public Safety was established.

THE REVOLUTION - STAGE TWO: THE JACOBIN DICTATORSHIP

With these measures, there opens the truly heroic chapter of the French revolution. It is despised by the bourgeoisie and the opportunists because the mass movement took the centre of the political stage, a movement which was totally uncompromising in its determination to destroy the old regime and anyone who wanted to compromise with it.

Of this period Marx said:

'The whole of French terrorism was nothing but a plebeian manner of settling accounts with the enemies of the bourgeoisie, with absolutism, feudalism and philistinism.'

Today the bourgeoisie and its lackeys want us to forget that they triumphed by such means.

In July 1793 Robespierre, leader of the Jacobins was elected to the Committee of Public Safety. The Jacobins were now in the ascendant, their power deriving from the mass popular movement.



In the countryside the peasants celebrated the revolution dancing around the revolutionary emblem - the 'bonnet phrygien' of the sans culottes

The Slave revolt



Slavery, brutal oppression, exploitation and racist genocide lay at the base of the massive fortunes built by the nascent French bourgeoisie. Between 1770 and 1790 the slave population of the French Antilles rose from 379,000 to 650,000 and their exports reached £9 million. In 1789, St. Domingo (now Haiti) had a slave population of 465,000 slaves. Ruled by 30,000 whites it was the largest and richest French colonial possession on the Caribbean furnishing nearly a quarter of France's national income.

It was not surprising therefore that the bourgeois was unwilling to abolish slavery in the French colonies. But abolished it was. And the main credit for this must go to Toussaint l'Ouverture, outstanding black revolutionary, dubbed the Black Jacobin, who led the first successful slave revolt in St. Domingo. Despite his lack of formal military education, he became a brilliant military strategist.

When the British seeking to undermine France's colonies invaded them in 1793, they lost 100,000 men to slave revolts and disease. Instrumental in preventing the British success was Toussaint l'Ouverture and the risen slaves of St. Domingo.

For further reading on Toussaint l'Ouverture:

The Black Jacobin by CLR James
'This Gilded African' - Toussaint l'Ouverture by Wenda Parkinson

Reading on the origins of capitalism and the French Revolution.

There are literally thousands of books on this subject. We list only a few - all available in English.
The Age of Revolution 1789-1848 by EJ Hobsbawm
Revolutionary Europe by George Rude
The French Revolution 1787-1799 (2 volumes) by Albert Sobul
Understanding the French Revolution by Albert Sobul
A Short History of the French Revolution by Albert Sobul
The French Revolution (2 volumes) by Georges Lefebvre

The sans-culotte did not however blindly tail the bourgeois Jacobins, who however revolutionary remained bourgeois. Led by outstanding personalities such as Hebert, Jacques Roux and Marat, they had their own social and political interests and demands. They sharply felt the class limits of the bourgeois revolution.

Rejecting formal equality, they demanded 'not just equality of rights, but equality of enjoyment'. Jacques Roux wrote: 'Liberty is but a vain phantom when a class of men can starve others with impunity. Equality is but a vain phantom when the rich, through their monopolies, exercise the right of life or death on their fellow men.'

Hostile to the big bourgeoisie, they demanded state intervention to limit its rights to accumulate at the expense of the small producer: 'Make haste to unconditionally set the price of necessary foodstuffs, the wages for work, the profits of industry and commerce... you will say that this is undermining property which must be sacred and inviolable. Without a doubt... but don't they know, these scoundrels that property has no basis beyond physical need?'

To secure the support of the sans-culotte the Jacobins made significant concessions. They not only put a ceiling on the price of all food and essential commodities but ensured that this 'General Maximum' was enforced. Hoarders were to be punished by death.

Under pressure from the sans-culotte organised throughout Paris in political clubs, the Jacobins then began a systematic and ruthless campaign against the nobility and vacillating bourgeoisie. Known as the Great Terror and famous for the guillotine, this was the period of the absolute dictatorship of the revolutionary bourgeoisie supported by the masses.

While waging terror against the nobility, the entire economy was subordinated to the war effort and the army was transformed by mass conscription into a national revolutionary force.

Through these measures the Revolution succeeded in effectively decapitating feudal reaction, external and internal.

With the defeat of the counter-revolution and external threat, the basis for the alliance between the revolutionary bourgeoisie and the masses vanished. It was already under enormous strain. The social demands of the mass movement extended beyond the maximum to include demands for better housing, education and other demands. This, even the revolutionary bourgeoisie was not prepared to grant. But even more significantly, the bourgeoisie was not prepared to concede to the political demands of the mass movement whose insistence on direct democracy and the right of recall presaged some of the fundamental political principles of the socialist working class movement.

Having united with the mass movement to settle scores with the nobili-

ty, Robespierre was now forced to attack the mass movement itself, which given its poverty stricken conditions was not prepared to leave the political stage to the bourgeoisie alone. In March 1793, Hebert was arrested and executed along with the leadership of the sans-culotte and their clubs closed down.

Having thus destroyed the Jacobins' main social support, Robespierre came under attack on his right from his erstwhile ally Danton. Opportunist historians present Danton as the humane and civilised face of the Revolution counterposing him to Robespierre the bloodthirsty extremist. While undoubtedly contributing to the Revolution, Danton was a vacillator. A libertine, he frequently took bribes from the Court, personally enriched himself during the course of the Revolution and was constantly wheeling and dealing hoping to concoct some compromise solution with the enemies of the revolution. In April Danton and his allies were arrested and executed.

But none of this helped the Jacobins. Robespierre was now totally isolated. With the end of the external and internal counter-revolution, the bourgeoisie demanded an end to the Terror and an end to Jacobinism. It had done its task and terrifyingly unleashed the genie of a mass urban 'ar movement. The bourgeoisie none of this. On 27 July, Robespierre now isolated was arrested, and on the following day executed with dozens of his followers.

With Robespierre's execution, the outstanding chapter of the French revolution ends. But as Marx said, it 'knocked the feudal basis to pieces and mowed off the feudal heads which had grown on it.' Henceforth all arrangements between classes in French society, were conducted on the terms of the bourgeoisie.

From 1794 to 1799 revolutionary France was ruled by an unstable Directory combining different factions of the bourgeoisie. It was removed from power by Napoleon Bonaparte who centralised the state, and in Marx's words:

'created inside France the conditions under which alone free competition could be developed, parcelled landed property exploited and the unchained industrial productive power of the nation employed; and beyond the French borders he everywhere swept the feudal institutions away, so far as was necessary to furnish bourgeois society in France with a suitable up-to-date environment on the European continent.'

The revolutionary mass movement, whilst defeated was not destroyed. In the years following the fall of the Jacobins new forces emerged, forces fashioned by the newly born bourgeois society. It came onto the historical stage as an organised political force in 1795 with the Conspiracy of the Equals led by Babeuf. And it is to Babeuf that today's revolutionary working class can trace its origins.

Active during the revolution, Babeuf was the first conscious communist leader of the working class. Unlike the Hebertists, Jacques Roux, Marat who all based their programme on private property, equally divided, and harked back to the bygone age of petty commodity production, Babeuf rejected private property. Firmly convinced that private property recreates inequality, Babeuf's aim was:

'to establish the communal management of property and abolish private possession.'

His communist ideals were transmitted to the working class movement through Buonarroti, Blanqui and then Marx and Engels who gave communism its scientific foundations.

Thus do communists show the historical journey which unites the progressive revolutionary movement today, with its proud ancestors from the Glorious Revolution of 1789. ■

Support the Kurds

On 23 June, the British Home Office imposed visa restrictions on emigration from Turkey. Since 2 May this year, more than 3000 Kurds have come to Britain, fleeing persecution, harassment and torture. For those most in need of political asylum, the only escape route has now been cut off: official papers can only be obtained from government offices in Istanbul—for known Kurdish political activists, this is like walking into a death trap. But the suffering is not yet over for those Kurds who do reach this country. CAT WIENER speaks to IHSAN QADIR, Co-ordinator of the Kurdistan Workers Association, about the crisis.

Britain's treatment of the Kurdish refugees has been in breach of UN guidelines; only 141 claims were processed by the beginning of June, of which only two were granted refugee status, 21 'temporary leave to remain' and 19 deported. According to Amnesty International, at least two plane-loads of refugees have been denied entry and returned to Istanbul to face renewed detention and torture. 200 have been detained at Winchester and Dorchester prisons and the infamous Latchmere House, where they went on a hunger strike. Hundreds have found themselves sleeping on the floor in church and

prison, of whom a great majority are Kurds, most of the Kurdish leaders have been arrested, tortured and executed. Torture is systematically used by Turkey as a way of stopping Kurdish mobilisation. They use the excuse that there is a guerilla movement, there is a civil war going on, and there is no opposition in Turkey which criticises the practice of the Turkish state.

FRFI: *Why is that?*

What happens is that chauvinism has taken on a particular form in Turkey, 'Kemalism'—an ideology that holds the national borders of Turkey as a

ning some dirty work. And of course some of the people involved in the May Day events have been detained and tortured in Istanbul. This is the background to the current situation.

FRFI: *And what has their experience been on coming to this country in search of asylum?*

The decision to go to another country to find political asylum is not an easy one. It's a totally alien society. Morale is very low, they are without families, they are isolated here. They receive emergency payments from the DSS of £23-24—and most of it goes on travelling here to sort out the DHSS, housing, medical needs, we do counselling here, and so on, so it's a terrible problem. The Kurdistan Workers Association runs a soup kitchen, but because of the shortage of funding it is very difficult to feed all these people—we are looking after more than 2000 people here, so of course financial assistance is needed. They have been very unhappy at the way the Minister of Immigration, Mr Timothy Renton, has acted, especially when he says that all these people are seeking employment, and are not genuine refugees. So of course it has made things harder for them. But now as things become clearer, more and more people are being given exceptional leave to remain or accorded refugee status, and I don't know what Mr Renton will have to say about that. The number of people who have been deported so far has been considerable.

FRFI: *What happens to those who are deported back to Turkey?*

We know that several of them have been put in prison, questioned and tortured. The fate of the rest of them we don't know. Unfortunately the British government's response to the whole situation has been very negative. Although they recognise the terrible human rights record of Turkey, they have said that it will not affect their economic ties.

FRFI: *Now the Turkish government has hired Saatchi & Saatchi, Thatcher's image-promoters, to improve their image...*

Even Saatchi & Saatchi cannot hide what's going on in Turkey, even they cannot hide what's happening to Kurds. It's a PR exercise, but it will be effective unless people in this country come out loudly and clearly and put pressure on the British government. So we ask the labour movement and trade union movement and the British working class and humanitarian organisations to come and rally behind the Kurdish national liberation movement, and to join us in condemning Turkey and calling for international solidarity for the Kurds and their right to self-determination.

The Kurdish Refugee Support Group urgently needs your support.

Send donations to:
The Kurdish Refugee Support Group
489 Kingsland Road
London E8

SATURDAY 29 JULY
Support the demonstration
organised by the Kurdish Refugee Support Group to welcome the Kurdish refugees and demand:
'Stop Detentions! No Deportations!'

Assemble at 12 noon Clissold Park, N16 to march to rally at Hackney Town Hall.

For details tel: 249 6930



Kurdish guerrillas

A journey through Kurdistan

'The Kurdish people in Turkey are an oppressed nation. Can you conceive of a people who aren't allowed to sing their own songs in their own language, who are denied the right to exist as a nation, to say "We are Kurdish"?' (The late Yilmaz Guney, revolutionary film director and a Kurd)

FRFI reader Bill Bolloten travelled through Turkish-occupied Kurdistan in May, and has sent this report.

Travelling east from the relatively developed west of Turkey, the contrasts everywhere are striking. The crushing poverty and underdevelopment which forces millions of Kurds to seek a living in Western Turkey and Europe can be seen in every town and village.

While the Turkish government has lured Saatchi & Saatchi to promote a 'democratic' image to the world, all the Kurdish provinces remain under martial law. There are no democratic rights here and no possibility of Kurds organising politically as Kurds.

The whole area is quite literally flooded with soldiers, gendarmes and armed police. In the Syrian and Iraqi border areas many schools are being used as army posts. The intense beauty and stillness of the Kurdish

bidden to speak their mother tongue. Their identities as young Kurds are denigrated by a school system which imposes the chauvinist national culture of Turkey, embodied in the cult of Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey.

Statues and busts of Atatürk are everywhere—from tiny hamlets to the cities. For Kurds, they stand as a symbol of Turkish oppression and chauvinism and are hated. Is this why the equestrian statue of Atatürk in Diyarbakir has a permanent armed guard?

The slogan 'Ne Mutlu Türk Diyeme' (Joy comes to him who considers himself a Turk) is painted all over Kurdistan. These words of Atatürk are a grossly chauvinist insult to Kurds. It is as if the British government erected signs in West



Mardin refugee camp

mountain villages is punctuated by the rattle of army helicopters.

In Hakkari province, the buses and cars I travelled on were halted at military roadblocks, often every five or six kms. Kurdish passengers were ordered to produce their ID cards which were scrutinised by soldiers or plain clothes security men. Nervous, young conscript soldiers kept their weapons pointed at the Kurds, who must go through this humiliation many times each day. Nervous these soldiers most certainly were, for this is an area where guerrillas of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) have maintained an armed resistance to the fascist Turkish government.

Kurdish is spoken by more than 12 million people here, yet I didn't see a single Kurdish newspaper or book anywhere. This isn't surprising as it is a punishable offence to write or even speak Kurdish. Drivers would frequently change the tape or turn down the Kurdish songs on their cassette players when a policeman or soldier drew near. Conversations in Kurdish would become hushed or simply end.

In school, Kurdish children are for-

Belfast saying 'It's great to be English'.

Many thousands of Kurds are now penned in refugee camps in Turkish-occupied Kurdistan, following the genocidal chemical bombings of Halabja and other villages by the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The largest of these camps is near Mardin and holds over 8000 Kurds. I saw thousands of shabby tents crammed into a few acres. The heat was searing. There was no shade. The camp is surrounded by a fence and armed guards. The conditions must have been appalling. God knows how those desperate people are suffering in what is a virtual prison, thousands of kilometres from their homes.

A Dutch traveller I met really summed up the plight of these Kurds when he said with some irony: 'The best thing that can be said is that they're alive.'

Yet on my return to England I have read an Observer report that 3000 of the refugees at the camp near Mardin are now gravely ill after their bread was poisoned by agents of the Saddam Hussein regime. ■



Immigration detention centres — prisons for asylum-seekers

community halls, living in poverty. The Kurdistan Workers Association has been working with the Kurdish Refugee Support Group to try to provide housing, food and assistance for the refugees. Here FRFI speaks to Ihsan Qadir, Co-Ordinator of the Kurdistan Workers Association, about the crisis.

FRFI: *Could you tell us something about your own experiences in Kurdistan?*

It's not so much my own experience as the experience of all the Kurdish people. Since 1925, the Kurdish language is banned, the Kurdish existence is not recognised, the Kurds live in Turkey as a non-existent group, they try to make us invisible. Our land is occupied by about 400,000 troops, plus about 200,000 'gendarmes'. On top of that we have got the police forces. Now we have got about 60,000 village guardsmen. So we are talking about a massive machinery of terror, organised and mobilised by the Turkish state against the Kurdish people. We are unable to raise our voice: more than a quarter of a million people are in

holy thing. The Turkish Communist Party has never questioned that ideology in this sense. They are absolutely against the secession of the Kurdish nation from Turkey.

FRFI: *Who then in your view does represent the Kurdish people?*

Well, the Kurdish people have many representatives. They are fighting at all levels, not just militarily: there are military, political and cultural struggles going on, all part and parcel of a liberation struggle. Everyone in Kurdistan is contributing to that end, and it is an open battle as to who wins the people's hearts, who wins the masses—then they will lead that movement.

FRFI: *Could you tell us something about the refugees who have been arriving here, particularly since May?*

All of them are Kurds who have been suffering at the hands of the Turkish army, raiding their villages, torturing them, forcing them either to leave or to become agents. In a recent municipal election held in Maras, those who massacred about 117 Kurds in 1978 were re-elected and the Kurds in that area believe that Turkey is again plan-

You might have thought that a rally at which Zephania Mothopeng, President of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, was speaking would have brought everyone, at least in London, who opposes apartheid, together to salute a leader who has given most of his life to the struggle. Amongst a galaxy of leading freedom fighters thrown up by the struggle against the racist South African regime, President Mothopeng has an unparalleled history.

He was a leading PAC member when the PAC was formed in 1959 under the leadership of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe. He was a leader during the Anti-Pass Campaign in 1960 when 69 were massacred at Sharpeville, and the foundations of apartheid were shaken by the mass uprising led by the PAC. He was there when the PAC and ANC were banned and launched the armed struggle. Captured and imprisoned in 1963, he was released ten years later, in time to become a political organiser in Soweto. In 1976, charged with 'anti-racism' and 'organising' the Soweto Uprisings, along with others from the PAC and BCM, he was tried in secret and sentenced to two terms of 15 years. He was granted early unconditional release last November.

Somehow, President Mothopeng has managed to be out of jail at decisive times when the black majority have unleashed their power and pushed history forwards. There are not many in the liberation movements who have such a history. The PAC's rally at Conway Hall on 6 July was an opportunity to salute that history, that courage.

Nevertheless we cannot claim to be surprised that the British Anti-Apartheid Movement and its supporters did not turn out in force to salute an undisputed hero of the struggle. Had they done so they would have destroyed at least three of their own myths about the struggle: first, that the PAC is a (black) racist organisation; second that it is anti-communist; and third, that the Soweto Uprisings were a spontaneous outburst of anger, politically unled. Myths about the PAC are allowed currency in the AAM with the result that AAM members remain ignorant - kept in ignorance. That ignorance becomes arrogance - a kind of imperialist, and therefore racist, contempt for a signi-



Zeph Mothopeng speaks

ON THURSDAY 6 JULY COMRADE ZEPHANIA MOTHOPENG, PRESIDENT OF THE PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA, ADDRESSED AN OVERFLOWING HALL IN LONDON. CAROL BRICKLEY ASSESSES ITS IMPACT AND BELOW WE PRINT DAVID REED'S SPEECH TO THE RALLY ON BEHALF OF THE RCG.

ficant and powerful section of the movement. So they did not come to the rally.

Do not, however, get the impression that Conway Hall was empty. It was packed; the hall, the foyer, the corridors, and it buzzed with excitement. At least half the audience was black. It was an audience of those who have enough respect for all sections of the liberation movement, to have investigated deeper than the level of a pop concert. They expected a political meeting.

The platform alone would have dispelled AAM myths. Alongside President Mothopeng, and representatives of black organisations - the AAPRP, the PACM, Labour Party Black Sections and Paul Boateng MP - stood David Reed from the RCG, myself from City of London Anti-Apartheid Group and the

NUJ's deputy President. These last three are white, and at least two of us are avowed communists.

But it is not surprising that the particular brand of Communism represented on this platform was the RCG. We share in common with the PAC a belief that the only possible vanguard of the liberation struggle is the oppressed - the black majority. The AAM would call that 'racist'. Our position did not arrive by accident: it is the product of our work in another arena - the Irish liberation struggle. When James Connolly said 'We are out for Ireland for the Irish', he was expressing not a racist view of the English, but the central demand for self-determination - the freeing of the Irish nation from its oppressors, with the agents and guarantors of that liberation the Irish themselves,

in particular the working class and the most oppressed. Connolly also predicted the outcome of abandoning the liberation struggle to an English imperialist solution, partition. He said it would result in a 'carnival of reaction'. Seventy years later we have witnessed how right he was. The AAM, and indeed most of the British left know nothing of this, so they weren't at the PAC rally.

The PAC has never had a racist position. From its inception it has made clear that it is involved in a national liberation struggle with self-determination for the dispossessed African majority at the centre. Their definition of African is not determined by skin colour, but by commitment to Africa and the liberation of Azania under majority rule. For this reason Sobukwe and others disagreed with the ANC leader-

ship's adoption of the Freedom Charter; the formation of separate organisations for blacks, 'coloureds', 'Indians' and whites; and what they see as the dropping of the demand for self-determination in favour of a necessary but limited anti-apartheid struggle. These were the reasons for the formation of the PAC in 1959. Had the AAM been there, President Mothopeng, who outlined all these positions in his speech, would have dispelled their myths.

There was one speaker who couldn't make it to the rally who could have taken the message back to the AAM. Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, who was invited to speak as President of the International Defence and Aid Fund, is also President of the AAM. He is a contemporary of Zephania Mothopeng, but because of his age, poor health and

a 'pressing engagement in the West Country', Huddleston could not add 'another major speech to his schedule'. This was the greatest shame.

President Mothopeng, now aged 74, was released from prison in November 1988 with a very serious illness. When he came to Britain in May it was discovered he also had untreated TB. Nevertheless he had no intention of dodging another major speech. He would have been excused for making it short, but he spoke for more than an hour with a brilliance and energy which belied his age and illness. He has no intention of retiring from the struggle. He spoke not only of the basic tenets of the PAC and its history, but also of the current situation of the liberation struggle, and the determination of the youth who welcomed him on his release. His perception is as sharp now as it must have been in 1976:

'We demand comprehensive and mandatory sanctions on the racist regime. We reject the contention that they hurt us more than the oppressor... However, we will not have a revolution by sanctions alone or the downfall of the racist apartheid regime. Sanctions play a supportive or complementary role... To those who contend that continued investment will improve apartheid out of existence, we maintain the simple logic that you cannot feed a snake and hope that it will die...'

On the question of negotiations our position has always been that there can be meaningful negotiations only from a position of strength, and a willingness of the part of the settler minority to accept the will of the African majority. As of now, that willingness is lacking... I must emphasise that the workers and the people are at the very heart of the struggle for national liberation and self-determination. And they will continue to be the vanguard to consolidate freedom and self-determination, to ensure an equitable distribution of the land and wealth... Economically we stand for a planned economy... It is our contention that the vast illiterate and semi-illiterate masses of Azania are the cornerstone of the struggle for democracy.'

For national liberation and socialism in Azania

Last year on 21 March at the City AA rally to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre, for the first time, a section of the anti-apartheid movement shared a platform with a leader of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, the organisation which led the positive action campaign on 21 March 1960 against south Africa's racist pass laws. I had the honour on behalf of the RCG of speaking on that platform.

Today, if I may say so, we have an even greater honour of sharing this platform not only with one of the leading organisers of the Anti-Pass Campaign from the PAC but also with a comrade who is associated with the Soweto uprising - the event which set off the latest phase of the intense struggle for freedom taking place in Azania. The RCG welcomes comrade Zephania Mothopeng to this country. We do so with the commitment that we will step up our efforts in support of the liberation struggle in Azania and will not cease in that support until all Azania is free.

The outcome of the struggle to free Azania is of crucial import-

ance to the whole world. The imperialists know that if they lose in Azania then their economic and political power will come under severe threat throughout the rest of the world. The Azanian liberation movement has at its heart the black working class - a class that will not stop with the overthrow of apartheid but will go on until the system which created and nourished apartheid - capitalism - is finally and forever destroyed. So the imperialists are taking steps to hold back the struggle, taking steps to ensure that the economy which gives them their super-profits will survive.

The imperialist's crusade in southern Africa is led by Margaret Thatcher. At the time of her recent trip to Africa in March this year the editorials of the British media were full of helpful advice.

The *Observer*, clearly deeply concerned about the interests of Lonrho in Africa, told her 'that pressure on the South Africans must be maintained, but only hard enough to make sure they listen. The South African economy must be preserved, in the

interests of all the communities'.

The *Independent* informed us that 'Capitalism is colour blind. This is the point Mrs Thatcher should be making on her present tour, and to prove her good faith she should offer additional British investment in South African enterprises in which workers of all races are promoted on merit.'

Finally a major article in the *Financial Times* said that 'above all... Mrs Thatcher would like to crown her career by making South Africa safe for capitalism, a republic in which the rule of law and the mechanism of the market act together to overcome all problems.'

The imperialists know what they are doing. Their aim is to preserve their investments and trade at all costs while forcing cosmetic changes on the regime. British exports to the apartheid regime increased yet again in 1988 by 13.3 per cent to over £1bn, after an increase of 12 per cent the previous year. British banks continue to co-operate with the regime to enable it to service its \$21bn debt. That is why the butcher De Klerk was

warmly welcomed in Britain and other imperialist circles last month. That is why the all too small protests against his visit to Britain were barely reported in the British press.

Thatcher is not only the enemy of the black people of Azania, she is also the enemy of the British working class. The outcome of this struggle in Azania is vital for our struggle here in this country. Anything which weakens British imperialism weakens our enemy here. That is why there is an urgent need to build a strong and united solidarity movement in this country which will oppose British imperialism's plans in southern Africa and give unconditional support to all sections of the liberation movement fighting for freedom in Azania.

To build that movement we have to break with the racist paternalism, that crucial component of British imperialism's policy in southern Africa. Self-determination for the people of Azania means what it says. It is not for British people to decide who are the leaders of the Azanian struggle. It is for the black people of Azania. We have no right to elect a government of Azania in advance of the black people themselves. The people will choose their leaders, choose their government, and the kind of society they want to live in. Our task is to stop the imperialist

government of this country imposing its wishes on the black people of southern Africa. For one thing we can be certain of is that anything the imperialists want is neither in the interests of the black people of southern Africa nor in the interests of the British working class.

That is why it is crucial at this very important stage of the liberation struggle to fight to build a united non-sectarian, open and democratic solidarity movement in this country.

As communists we make no secret of the fact that we want the black working class and oppressed masses to win power in Azania. For only if that happens is it certain that the struggle will not end without the masses of people achieving their freedom, their justice and their democracy - that is until national liberation and socialism has been achieved.

That is why while supporting unconditionally all sections of the movement fighting apartheid in Azania, our solidarity as communists is aimed at bolstering the people fighting for national liberation and socialism.

We do this by giving support to all those fighting in Azania so ensuring that the representatives of the black working class and oppressed have a voice in Britain and are able to receive solidarity from the people of this country.

Further the solidarity movement in Britain has also to be non-sectarian, open and democratic in relation to the movement in Britain. Only a movement of the less privileged layers of the working class in Britain, will give the kind of solidarity which will support the forces in Azania fighting for national liberation and socialism.

A movement only of Kinnock supporters who do not even want to see socialism in Britain are hardly likely to support it in Azania.

Hence the vital necessity of an open and democratic movement both here and in Azania to allow the interests of the majority - the working class and oppressed to come to the fore. That is why the RCG has played and will continue to play a central role in City AA, the solidarity movement which subscribes to these principled aims.

If we build along the lines started by City AA we lay the foundation for the unity of the British working class and the working class in Azania to destroy apartheid and its British imperialist backers and so lay the foundations for socialism in both Azania and Britain. Victory to the fighting people of Azania

Long live the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
Britain out of Apartheid
Apartheid out of Britain

'Lifers' – political hostages of British imperialism



Brendan Lillis is in the thirteenth year of a life sentence and, like the many 'lifers' in the Six Counties has no release date. He was arrested in 1976, held for five days in the notorious Castlereagh interrogation centre and was held on remand for thirteen months. In 1977 he was sentenced to life by a juryless Diplock court for causing explosions for which there was no loss of life or injury.

Below are edited extracts from an interview with Brendan. We would like to thank Rab Henry, prisoner in H-block 6, for supplying this material to FRFI.



In an article accompanying the interview Rab points out:

'Ostensibly the British government and the NIO (Northern Ireland Office) portray the LSRB (Life Sentence Review Board) process as "non-political and impartial and there to assess individual cases on individual merits, for release." However, it is a device which allows the NIO to manipulate releases for political ends.'

'Of the 203 Republican life prisoners: two are into their 17th year of imprisonment; 14 – 16th; 9 – 15th; 21 – 14th; 28 – 13th; 31 – 12th; 15 – 11th.

The review procedure itself is highly secretive, arbitrary and subjectively biased. The yearly reports on individual prisoners are drawn up by prison officers and governors who are ex-members of the B-Specials, UDR, RUC, British army, etc... When the prisoner's case is reviewed by the LSRB at the ten year stage of his/her sentence, s/he has no right to be represented, no right to see reports/materials in front of the Board, no right to be given any reason for unfavourable decisions and no right to know the make-up of the LSRB.

'The Campaign for Lifers has six proposals: abolition of indeterminate sentences; the right to legal representation at the review; the right to know the reason for unfavourable decisions; the publication of objective criteria for release; the ending of secret reports; the right to challenge the make-up of the LSRB.

'We, the prisoners and our relatives would appeal to people to actively support the six proposals, write to foreign and domestic political representatives and ask them to take the plight of Britain's political hostages up with the British government.'

INTERVIEW WITH BRENDAN LILLIS

Long term imprisonment causes hardship and suffering for prisoners and their families... Indeterminate sentences are designed to demoralise and depoliticise us and as a group, it has actually produced the opposite... We know that to counter and defeat the effects of indeterminate sentences we must act in unison and from this position of unity which is the key to our strength, have a clear vision of our objectives.

Whether emotional, financial or otherwise the hardships are shared collectively by my family. One important part of coping is that they are conscious of the political nature inherent in the use of life sentences and of its intended effects upon the prisoners and their families... Their support and encouragement has been channelled into the setting up of the Campaign for Lifers. The Campaign for Lifers actively works to achieve the abolition of the unjust and prejudiced practice of dealing with lifers and to ensure that all such prisoners serving these terms are treated impartially irrespective of their politics or religion.

laxed – both Gerrys can share recreation with other prisoners and watch television for an hour or so each evening. Yet the harassments still continue; Gerry Hanratty has been systematically hindered in his attempt to obtain text books and cassettes in order to teach himself German (neither can speak any German, a factor also contributing to their isolation). Mail is heavily censored and continuously disrupted; anyone regularly writing to the prisoners often experiences a complete muddling up of the order in which the letters were written. And finally the circumstances under which the visits take place.

These are all attempts on behalf of the West German criminal and prison authorities to undermine the morale of the two Gerrys and isolate them from contact with the outside world.

Help break through the isolation! Send letters and messages of solidarity to the two Gerrys!

Gerry McGeough, JVA Frankenthal. Gerry Hanratty, JVA Kaisheim. All letters must be sent via: Ermittlungsrichter am BGH, Herrenstrasse 45a, 7500 Karlsruhe, West Germany.

statement to be repeated or breaking off the dialogue because the subject we were discussing was 'forbidden'. These constant interruptions rendered the normal flow of communication impossible. Both prisoners are strip-searched before and after each visit and the notes taken by the translators are taken in for later analysis.

In spite of these harassments, both Gerrys were in good spirits and appeared in reasonable health. Yet visits under these conditions clearly deny the prisoners their basic rights – Gerry McGeough now refuses to accept any more visits for the foreseeable future under these circumstances.

For the first five months of their incarceration, the two Gerrys were being held in near total isolation. For weeks they did not even have a radio, and so had no idea what was going on in the outside world. The recreation areas and corridors had to be cleared of all other prisoners as soon as they left their cells. For the first 116 days, Gerry McGeough's arms were handcuffed behind his back whenever he left his cell, even during recreation or for going to the showers.

In the meantime, these prison restrictions have been somewhat re-

A visit to Irish prisoners in West Germany

LIZ PALM

After successfully applying for a visitor's permit, I was able to visit in April the two Irishmen being held on remand in separate prisons in West Germany. Gerry McGeough and Gerry Hanratty have been held in the prisons in Frankenthal and Kaisheim since 30 August 1988 under suspicion of having participated in the attacks on British military institutions in West Germany in summer 1988.

The visit took place under strict surveillance and security measures. Before entering the visitors' room, I was thoroughly body-searched and, before visiting Gerry McGeough, two women warders stood behind me feeling through my hair and behind my ears and I had to take my shoes off so that the soles of my feet could be rubbed.

During the visit, a long table separated me from the prisoner; along one side sat two officers of the Federal Crime authorities as well as a prison warder and on the other side sat a translator who wrote down every single word that was being said. During the visit with Gerry Hanratty, both the translator and police officer regularly butted in, wanting some

Life sentences are primarily used to break our spirit of resistance to British rule in Ireland... The nature of the life sentence review procedure allows the Northern Ireland Office to politically manipulate releases. It enables us to be used as political hostages for political rewards such as ending the armed struggle, giving up political beliefs or used as a trade-off for concessions from political parties, communities and the Irish government. Tom King said that the time served will reflect the seriousness of the offence life sentence prisoners are convicted of. The hypocrisy of this statement is blatant. Private Ian Thain, a British soldier convicted and sentenced to life for the murder of a Belfast youth, was released after serving only two years of his sentence. Kevin McGrady (a paid perjurer), sentenced to three life terms for three separate murders, was released after serving only six years. Compare this to Republicans: Brendan Mailey has now served 16 years of a SOSP (Secretary of State's Pleasure) sentence and Paul Fleming has served 15 years.

From within the prisons we are organising ourselves to ensure strong opposition on the issue. We have initiated a letter-writing campaign nationally and internationally. Support continues to grow as more people become aware of the issue and the need for change. A few examples of support for our six proposals are: Probation Service, NIACRO, Quakers, Justice for Lifers, councils, trade unions, MPs, TDs, community groups and churchmen. Paddy Ashdown visited the prison and he supports our campaign.

On the outside is the CFL which is non-party-political and non-sectarian. Its main aim is to build sufficient public pressure to force the British government/Northern Ireland Office to move on the issue, implementing the campaign's six proposals.

In Britain you can write to the CFL and obtain further information on the campaign and how the existing LSRB is structured and invite CFL representatives to address meetings. People supportive of the campaign should use their influence to exert pressure on the British government to adopt the six proposals which are raised on the principal of natural justice. Any group or individual wishing to visit the prison to meet and speak with prisoners can do so by arrangement with the Campaign for Lifers. ■ Contact Campaign for Lifers at 5-7 Conway Mill, Conway Street, Belfast.

Manifesto for New Petit Bourgeoisie

The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) has just published a new draft of its programme, *the British Road to Socialism*, entitled *Manifesto for New Times*. As Thatcherism moves into crisis, political openings are slowly appearing. Water privatisation, the Poll Tax, the NHS White Paper have all generated a limited but increasing opposition. In addition, various groups of workers such as railwayworkers have taken action against further erosion of their conditions. Although these movements do not begin to approach the miners' strike in intensity, they are still important in the main part because Thatcher is on the defensive. It is against this backdrop that ROBERT CLOUGH looks at the political positions being adopted by the CPGB today.

The CPGB's *Manifesto for New Times* provides us with an object lesson on how political position is a reflection of social standpoint. The *Manifesto* is written by and for ever-so-slightly radical sections of what we call the new petit-bourgeoisie – professional sections, especially those in more useless jobs such as advertising, marketing, TV and so on. These strata view themselves as being of particular importance – they are very intelligent and enterprising, even dynamic, sorts. There is more, however: they are part of the majority, the affluent two thirds of the population who have done OK under Thatcher, in marked contrast to the one third who are increasingly destitute. It does not matter that they

stand outside the two main classes, for, as they gratifyingly note, 'Attachments to the common identity bred by class are weakening'. All this means that the working class are not so important now, or indeed class struggle; as to who has replaced it, well, it's this affluent two thirds whose support, the *Manifesto* tells us, 'will be vital to progressive change'.

So, if the affluent two-thirds is the motor of social change, how are their sympathies to be engaged? Well, let's clear away any mistaken notions right away: 'Socialism is not an enormous economic almshouse' (p3). For, we are solemnly informed, 'the dom-

estic and international market will play a role, as will professional, enterprising management. The market would encourage flexibility, diversity and dynamism blah blah' (p3). 'There has to be synthesis of the economic objectives of sustainability and competitiveness blah blah' (p21). State intervention yes, but this needs to develop 'in tandem with a new ethic of personal consumption and responsibility, as part of progressive individualism' (p21). This is the new alliterative CPGB – tough but tender, firm yet fair, entrepreneurial but ethical, competitive but caring. So, on the one hand, pure Thatcherism: 'The market is useful as a tool to co-ordinate lots of decentralised economic decisions. Markets can provide incentives and discipline, and promote innovation and diversity' (p28). On the other hand, a caring, tender soul: 'Markets tend to punish the already weak very harshly...' (p28). On the one hand we revel in notions of good and efficient management, on the other we want a nice welfare state for those dear paupers – although no almshouse, of course.

Good management obsesses the authors of our *Manifesto* – possibly because they are failed managers themselves, or maybe because they are just admirers of good managers. Anyway, they think good management might mean councils developing their direct labour organisations

'through forms of internal competition or sub-contracting' (p30), though I always thought that was called privatisation. Anyway, it seems too bad for anyone losing their job through this process – though as he or she would probably be drawn from the one third minority, this would not matter too much. Of course, there would always be the new welfare strategy to support the casualties, though, as you've already supposed, 'A new welfare strategy will only redistribute towards the poor if it can win the support of the well-off' (p30). Well, you know it's not an almshouse!

Anyway, our professionals have a tough old life ahead of them, since 'the whole nature of government also needs to be overhauled. At present, it operates in a far too amateurish and short-term way. It is not properly resourced in a strategic and intellectual sense' (p32). Although whether writing this sort of tosh is sufficient intellectual qualification is a pretty moot point.

In a document abounding with the gushing phrases and empty jargon of the advertising department, none is more gooey than the statement that 'In our view a thriving civil society is the key to a pluralistic and vibrant polity and society' (32). A sample of this 'vibrant polity' occurred on the previous page in a paragraph on the

monarchy:

'The monarchy is anti-democratic and an anachronism. Any serious constitutional reform is bound to transform its position in the political system. In the long run, we assert our commitment to republicanism. In the short-term, there should be a limitation of its powers.'

So you can be beautiful and a monarchist at the same time. Or you can be something really quite novel – a long-term republican. That is of course very different from a short-term republican such as Oliver Cromwell, but there again, he probably didn't have a proper ethic of personal consumption either. More Cromwellian is the lengthy list of tasks falling to the British in Ireland. Oh yes, we are in favour of Irish self-determination... in the long run! In the meantime, a 'vibrant polity' of British occupation will continue indefinitely.

So there you have it – a *Manifesto* for the New Professionals. It is written in their jargon to make it all the more attractive – after all, they do make a point about being 'consumer-sensitive'. Twelve years ago, when the CPGB presented the edition of *the British Road to Socialism* the *Manifesto* will replace, we described it as the position of the liberal, anti-working class wing of the Party. No longer a wing, these liberals have a position somewhere to the right of Kinnock; they are the modern CPGB. And in a nutshell, liberalism says no to spongers, but yes to bright young things from the advertising world. ■

OBITUARY

CLR James – revolutionary life

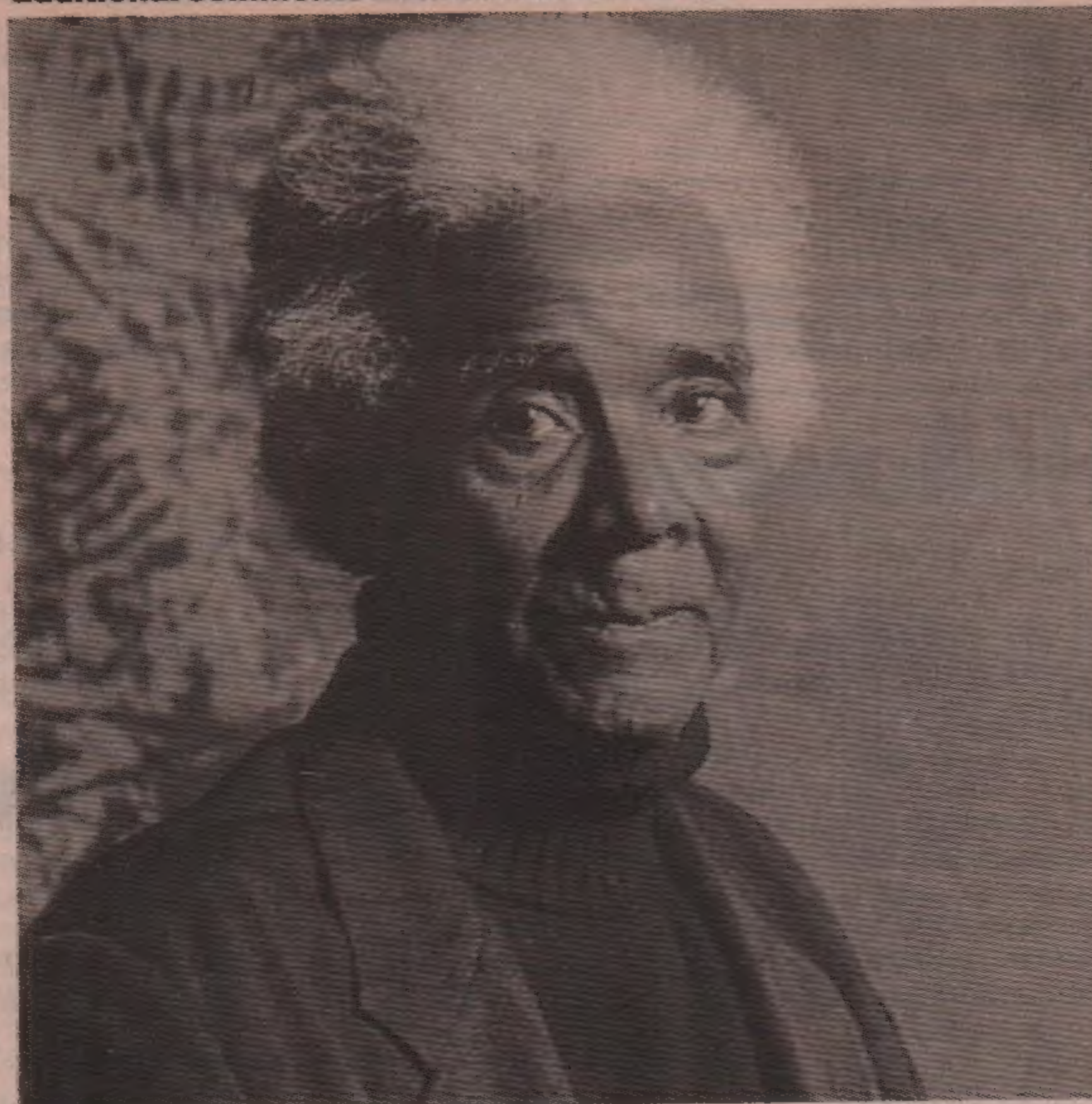
CLR James was one of the most influential political figures of the century. His independent and often eclectic interpretation of Marxism played a massive role in the liberation of Africa, whilst also providing some of the most accurate and incisive commentaries on the nations that then emerged.

James was born in Trinidad in 1901 and became known as a journalist and critic both there and in England, having moved to London in 1932. In 1938 he published his most famous book, *The Black Jacobins*, an account of the San Domingo slave rebellion that, between 1791 and 1803, succeeded in overthrowing the French colonialists, beating off the armies of three European nations and establishing the state of Haiti. It remains an outstanding work of Marxist history.

The title of that work made clear the connections between the revolution in France and the revolution in Haiti and this, James believed at the time, indicated the way forward for the struggle against colonialism in the modern period – proletarian revolution in the imperialist country that would facilitate nationalist uprisings in the colonies.

Within the next decade, however, James, working with the African Bureau set up in London by former Comintern member George Padmore, had completely re-evaluated that position. By the end of the Second World War, it was apparent first that there was no immediate prospect of a workers' uprising in Britain or France, and second, that in the light of Gandhi's successful campaigns in the liberation of India, it was possible to dislodge colonialist forces without such an uprising and even without

CLR James died on 31 May at the age of 88. Below we print an assessment of his life and work from an FRFI reader together with additional comments from Susan Davidson.

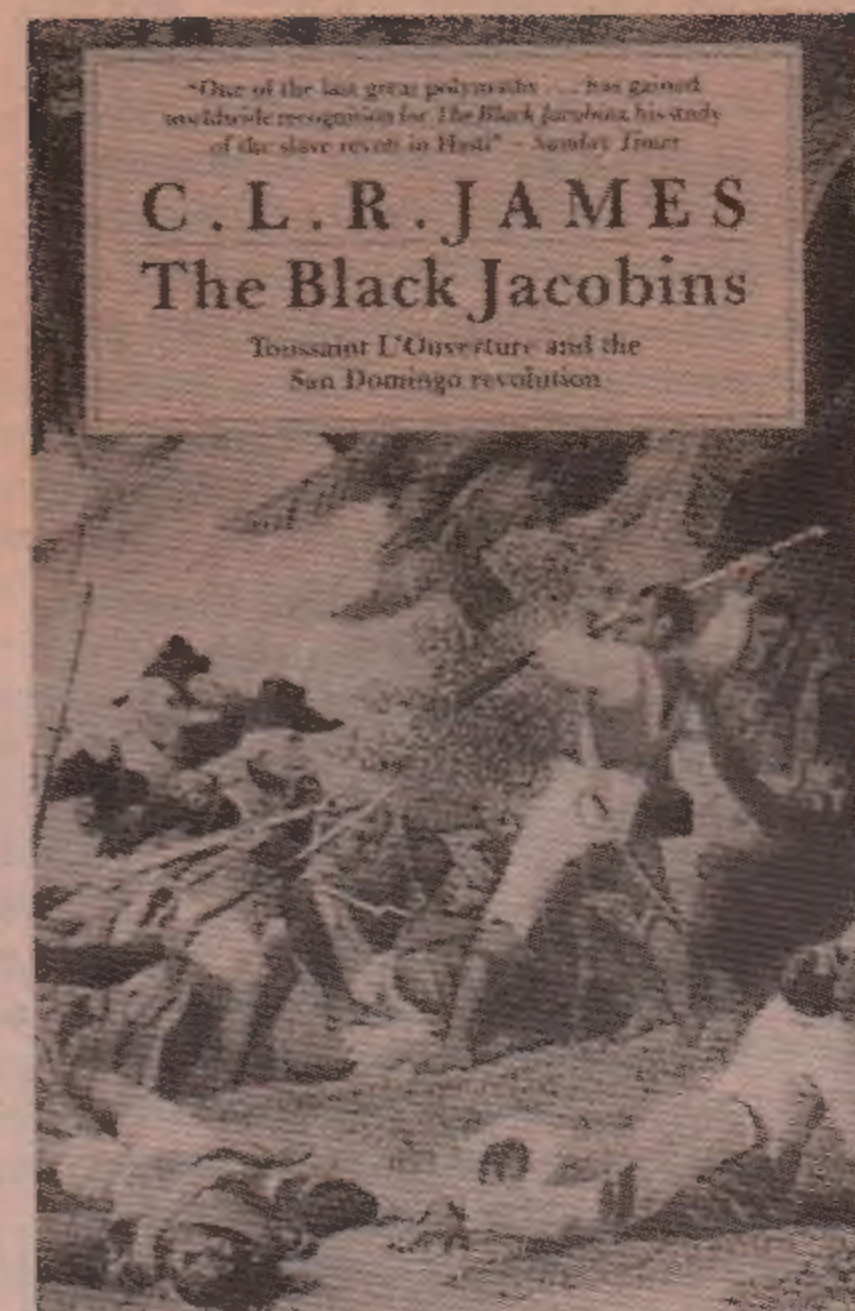


resorting to an armed struggle.

The position reached by the members of the African Bureau was that, while the colonial administrations were capable of handling riots or demonstrations they had, in James' words, 'neither the forces nor the experience to deal with a general strike of the great body of the people who refused to be provoked.' The call therefore was for the oppressed peoples of the colonies to exploit every constitutional option available

to build an organised and disciplined mass movement that was ultimately capable of launching such a general strike aimed at achieving national liberation.

Amongst the other members of the African Bureau were two of the future leaders of independent Africa, Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah. And it was the actions of Nkrumah, putting into practice these ideas of organisation in the process of freeing Ghana from British imperialism, that



sparked the anti-colonial struggle of the '50s and '60s.

In the final analysis, this was James' major contribution to modern politics. His involvement in developing the theories that set the stage for the major event of the second half of the 20th century – the liberation of Africa – marks him out as being one of the great revolutionary philosophers of our time. Before Padmore and James' work, revolutionary politics had emphasised the centrality of the proletariat in industrialised countries; after the success in Ghana, it became apparent that progress in the global fight against capitalist imperialism was going to come not from the enlightened working class of Europe, but from the life and death struggles of the most oppressed peoples of the world.

Andrew Benson

Susan Davidson from FRFI adds:

CLR James spent 15 years in the USA. He was illegally there but nevertheless participated in the Share Croppers Movement which united

poor whites and blacks in the southern States. It was from this experience that James developed a deeper understanding of the black question, the national question and the vanguard role of black people in the struggle for socialism. In 1944 he wrote:

'Side by side with his increasing integration into production which becomes more and more a social process, the Negro becomes more than ever conscious of his exclusion from democratic privileges as a separate racial group in the community. This dual movement is the key to the Marxist analysis of the Negro question in the USA.'

The Negroes are for the most part proletarian or semi-proletarian and therefore the struggle of the Negroes is fundamentally a class question. Such is the development of American capitalist society and the role of Negroes in it that the Negroes' struggle for democratic rights brings the Negroes almost immediately face to face with capital and the state. *The Marxist support of the Negro struggle for democratic rights is not a concession that Marxists make to the Negroes. In the United States today this struggle is a direct part of the struggle for socialism.*

CLR James' interests and talents were broad indeed. As a writer, his novel *Minty Alley* (1935) was the first dialect writing of its kind and blazed the way for modern Caribbean writing. He also excelled as a cricket writer. A lifelong enthusiast, he made his living by writing on cricket for the *Manchester Guardian* in the 1930s and 1940s. His reflections on that colonial game give great pleasure and much thought. *Beyond a Boundary* (1963) is a classic of cricket writing. It is also partly biographical.

FRFI mourns the passing of C.L.R. James. But we do so in the knowledge that his great contribution remains available for revolutionaries to read, enjoy and above all to learn from. ■

Labelled a Black Villain

Labelled a Black Villain is the story of one man's experience of seven years in British prisons. Trevor Hercules was incarcerated in all the major maximum security establishments (Gartree, Wandsworth, Albany, Parkhurst,) yet he refused to be cowed by the system and came out still fighting, still angry.

The book is well-written, sharp, descriptive. The account of the Gartree uprising which was reprinted in *The Observer* is an example of the dynamic style which Trevor Hercules employs to draw the reader into the cycle of repression and resistance which characterises prison life.

But there is a whole other dimension to the book. The narrative passages alternate with polemic and a philosophy is gradually unfolded. It is a philosophy of black consciousness with no blinkers. The author berates black people for their apathy and disorganisation; he attacks white racists and liberals alike and he insists that although racial pride is vital to unite black people and combat years of slavery of one sort or another, the underlying struggle is not purely a racial one.

When I met Trevor Hercules he explained that it was this side of the book which was most important to him and not the 'story line.'



'I wrote this book because I wanted to make a contribution to the black struggle. I couldn't write about black consciousness and awareness and have anybody take me seriously but I wrote about prisons. I said, 'Yeah, I'm a jailbird, look at me, I done seven years; I carried a gun and nicked people's money' and I called it *Labelled a Black Villain* so that people would buy it and I could get to them subtly with an ideology of black consciousness. I'd like to have called it 'A Black Identity' but who wants that? What radio programme would have called me up and said, 'We want to interview you about your book 'A Black

Identity' but 'A Black Villain' - oh yes!'

'I really wanted to make a contribution because I felt less than a man if that can be said and I saw all the racism and the lack of respect for black people, not only in this society, in England, but in Europe, the West, America, all those countries with a history of colonisation and nicking people's land and killing them. And I looked around and no-one wanted to say anything. And I saw all these people supposed to represent me and I thought "What are they talking about? Tell them about South Africa!"'

How do you want people to respond to your book?

I want black people to take a look at themselves and see that they're always lying down waiting for white people to come and give them a hand. They must have a positive outlook and anything we want to do we can achieve. We want racial equality; we want this and we want that. Who's going down to South Africa House? White people. Hey, black man, if you're complaining, why don't you go down to South Africa House and do it yourself? And I wanted white people to understand what is going on, not because people don't know already but because most people don't want to accept it. White people suffer from a guilt complex. At the end of the day I wrote it because I know that no individual white person is to blame. It's not a problem of colour, it's a problem of good and evil, it's a problem of class. There are some evil bastards who control the world, got all the wealth and aren't about to let go.'

'Racism is going to take a long time to get rid of, simply because of imperialism and colonialism. They had to belittle black people, black people had to become sub-human in order for slavery to exist. No-one could justify slavery unless the people that you were enslaving were not classified as human and even today that has to be maintained. Even after black people stopped being slaves in the sense of having no say at all about how they got from A to B they were modern day

slaves, economic slaves, and until we have economic power we'll always be slaves, here, in Africa, wherever, and I think its going to take a long time to get rid of that colonial mentality.'

'Life began in Africa. You go and tell most people that and they won't believe you. Go and tell the most Christian of Christian people that if God was anybody, God was black; they would leave the church. It comes down to colonialism and imperialism. A lot of people have to be de-brainwashed. Until then it is always going to be a struggle.'

This book is well worth reading on both levels. The prison narrative is so compulsive that it almost defeats the author's object as a reader keen to find out what happens next may be tempted to skip over the political passages, especially as they have a tendency to repeat the same basic points in different ways. But don't be tempted - do read it all! I recommend this book.

Nicki Jameson

Trevor Hercules - *Labelled a Black Villain*. (Fourth Estate. London 1989. £4.95)

TERRY O'HALLORAN MEMORIAL FUND

The RCG has launched a Memorial Fund to commemorate Terry's life and contribution to the political movement in Britain.

Terry played an important part in fighting for the rights of prisoners. The Terry O'Halloran Memorial Fund will be used to provide books and publications for prisoners at their request.

We plan to produce a special book plate for each book.

Please fill in the form below if you wish to donate.

I/We would like to donate £ _____ to The Terry O'Halloran Memorial Fund

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Women on remand in Holloway

Also recommended is *Women Inside* by Silvia Casale, a level-headed detailed survey of the condition of remand prisoners in Holloway.

Casale undertook a period of research in Holloway in mid-1985. She interviewed and 'tracked' a sample of 34 women remand prisoners over a period of 10 months and quotes extensively from the interviews. The book which results from that research is a comprehensive study of 'women and criminality'. The terminology is that of a sociologist and indeed Silvia Casale is described as 'an independent criminologist and member of the Home Board', but the book is free from most of the prejudices you might expect. It object rather is not why women do or don't 'commit crimes' but how their treatment by police, courts and prison differs from that meted out to men.

Stereotypical pictures of women are a large role and women who conform to 'feminine' behaviour patterns are frequently treated differently to those who refuse to do so.

Casale's stated aim is to 'identify

the civil liberties implications of the remand in custody of women defendants and offenders and to suggest changes in policy and practice'. With this remit, she scrutinises the tendency of the system to class women offenders as 'ill' and put them in special hospitals or psychiatric wings and she examines the effects of dislocation and estrangement from family, friends and advisers. She concludes that, 'Punishment is not the legitimate aim of remand in custody, nor the stated aim of the prison system when dealing with remands but it is the practical effect.'

The research is thorough and well-presented: its coverage includes mother and baby units, drug dependency and mental health. It condemns the complete inadequacy of provision for the increasingly large number of black women remanded for drug trafficking and immigration offences.

The book is full of suggestions for improvement. For example, access to telephones by prisoners would clear up a multitude of legal and prac-

tical difficulties. As this is not a political document, Casale never entertains the idea that the Prison Department may not actually be keen to make life better for prisoners and to eliminate malpractices and alienation. Instead she addresses herself concretely to reform and, in the last chapter, lays out a whole system of minimum standards and codes of practice, pointing out that in Britain there are currently no coherent legal minimum standards for prisons.

She concludes:

'The courts are not the primary focus of this study, but inevitably the research calls into question the results of the court process. It is impossible to conduct research on women remanded in custody without coming to the view... that a substantial proportion of remand prisoners do not belong in custody.'

Women Inside - The experiences of women remand prisoners in Holloway. Silvia Casale. (The Civil Liberties Trust 1989. £6.95)

INSIDE NEWS



On Saturday 17 June FRFI held a protest attended by 30 people outside the US Embassy, in support of Irish political prisoner Joe Doherty. Joe has been in custody in the USA since 1983 and is under threat of extradition.

In a message to the picket Joe commended 'your continuing commitment to the plight of Irish political prisoners' and said 'We must keep pressure to bear. The extradition of political activists must be universally condemned.' Messages of support were received from Irish political prisoners in Germany, Fr Des Wilson, friends and relatives of Liam Quinn, Irish Prisoners Appeal, the PAC and City AA. ■

WOEFUL FELTHAM

Another damning report has been published by the government's own Chief Inspector of Prisons. Judge Stephen Tummin has concluded that the Feltham young offenders establishment falls 'woefully short of expectations,' and he draws attention to squalid conditions, bad food, restricted visits and racist staff.

Feltham houses 250 convicted young offenders, some as young as 14, and 400 remand prisoners.

Prior to the Tummin report, the Board of Visitors had already concluded in their own annual report that since the introduction of Fresh Start, Prison Officers see their task as 'purely locking up... not preparing for re-entry into society.'

In the last year three workshops have been closed, no evening classes nor evening group work have been available and it has become the norm for convicted inmates to be on 20-hour a day lock-up.

FREE ENTERPRISE

On a cheerful note, so much for the efficiency of Britain's only privately-run prison. In the last 3 years 176 immigration prisoners have escaped from the Harmondsworth Detention Centre!

PRISONERS BIRTHDAYS

Robert Cunningham 131877 12 July, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs.

Brian Keenan B26380 17 July, HMP Leicester, Walford Road, Leicester LE2 7AJ

Thomas Quigley B69204 23 July, HMP Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight

Stephen Nordone 758663 2 August, HMP Gartree, Leicester Road, Market Harborough, Leics LE16 7RP

Paul Kavanagh L31888 12 August, HMP Leicester

Paul Hill 462778 13 August, HMP Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO 30 5 RS

Ronnie McCartney 463799 3 September, HMP Long Lartin

Liam Baker 464984 6 September, HMP Long Lartin

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! Readers and Supporters Groups

LONDON

FIGHTING THE POLL TAX - THE ISSUES

Speaker Lorna Reid (FRFI editorial board)

Wednesday 26 July, 7.30pm

Friends Meeting House, St. Martins Lane, WC2, near Trafalgar Square. (nearest tube Leicester Square).

MANCHESTER

All meetings take place at the Millstone, Thomas Street, off Tib Street, Manchester City Centre at 7.30pm.

Monday 7 August

IRELAND. CIVIL RIGHTS TO INTERNMENT 1968 to 1971.

Monday 21 August

IRELAND. THE RISE OF THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

Monday 4 September

THE FIGHT FOR LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS

For information of RCG meetings and activities in your area write to RCG, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX or phone 01 - 837 1688.

PUBLIC MEETING

Jointly organised by IRSP and Hands off Ireland.

Speaker - Eamon Mullin of IRSP.

Monday 24 July, 7pm, Manchester Town Hall.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Join the RCG contingents on these demonstrations:

Time to Go 12 August

Assemble 11am, Whittington Park, Holloway Road. March to a carnival in Finsbury Park.

IFM - Troops Out Now!

5 August

Assemble 1pm Islington Town Hall (rear), Upper Street, London N1.

NON STOP PICKET

SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY

9 AUGUST - 6pm

on the non-stop picket outside the South African Embassy, London

6 SEPTEMBER - WHITE ONLY ELECTION DAY IN SOUTH AFRICA Protest outside the South African Embassy 6pm

MURDER ON THE ROCK

HOW THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT GOT AWAY WITH MURDER

BY MAXINE WILLIAMS

64pp, £2.50 plus 40p p&p

A full expose of the murder of the three IRA volunteers in Gibraltar last year and the subsequent cover up. The evidence amassed in the booklet has been confirmed by recent revelations from the Spanish police and other sources. The British government committed murder and got away with it.

MURDER ON THE ROCK tells you how they did it and who were their accomplices.

Reviewed in *An Phoblacht/Republican News*: Murder on the Rock 'sets these killings in the context of shoot-to-kill and skilfully gathers the threads of the story from what had to have been the simultaneous planning of both the shootings and the cover up... it's the factual story, well told...'

In *Troops Out* - 'If like me, you had known that most of what got out about Gibraltar was a pack of lies, but had been unable to untangle it all, this account of the extent and success of the government's efforts could leave you feeling pretty sick and frightened... Highly recommended...'

In the *Irish Post* - '... lights a candle - not in veneration at any shrine but rather for the purpose of setting fire to those newspapers which co-operated in the cover up.'

Published in May, this new booklet had sold 1500 copies within a month. Can you afford not to read it?

LARKIN PUBLICATIONS

BCM BOX 5909, LONDON WC1N 3XX

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- A movement must be built in Britain in solidarity with the struggling peoples of Ireland, South Africa, Palestine. Help us to do this - **Join the RCG!**
- A movement must be built here in Britain which stands with the oppressed fighting racism, repression and poverty. Help build this movement - **Join the RCG!**
- A movement must be built which challenges and defeats the treachery of the opportunist British Labour and trade union movement - **Join the RCG!**

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Miners Strike 1984-85 People versus State by David Reed and Olivia Adamson. 144pp, special offer £1 plus 40p p&p

Viraj Mendis Life or Death? Edited by Eddie Abrahams and Viraj Mendis. 48pp, £1.50 plus 30p p&p

NEW PUBLICATIONS:

A new path for socialism? Revolutionary renewal in the Soviet Union and Cuba. By David Reed and Trevor Rayne. 21pp, £1.00 plus 28p p&p.

Value and Price in Marx's Capital by David Yaffe. A Revolutionary Communist reprint. 19pp, £1.00 plus 28p p&p.

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Labour's hypocrisy

This letter is directed at the so-called Labour Party 'leadership'.

Salute FRFI workers and readers. It is really great to be getting your paper now on a regular basis. With its high quality reporting and great coverage of prison struggle, it helps a lot to break the isolation.

With delight I have been reading the factual truth on Labour Party somersaults. Today, for me, it is a struggle to even think of the Labour Party as actually a serious party representing labour as in workers as it is daily shown and proved by the Labour Party that it is the right-wing complementing the ultra-right dictatorship of Thatcher and nothing more.

In serious issues such as Anti-Apartheid work, prison conditions, censorship, national self-determination for South Africa, South American countries and Palestine etc. can the muted rantings of the Labour Party be taken seriously when they back, fund and give moral support to the total censorship of their next door peoples, the Irish. They contribute to apartheid in Britain by their useless statements on the Winston Silcott case, Viraj Mendis, Kurdish peoples seeking political asylum and the return of Tamils to Sri Lanka. For sure the Labour Party don't call out the support and backing for non-white non-middle class and that is apartheid at its roots.

How can Labour Party utterings on self-determination for other countries be taken seriously while

they refuse to fully back the right of the Irish to self-determination.

How can they spout sterile statements on censorship in Russia and elsewhere when to be a worker for Irish self-determination means being banned from radio, TV, papers, arrests on entering Britain, cover-ups in the Rock Murders, Winchester Three, Birmingham Six cases etc.

How have they the brass neck to talk about harsh treatment of prisoners in other countries, exile of political activists in other countries, the murder of political opponents in other countries and stay mute about their own prisons . . . second to none in Europe for ill treatment . . . stay mute about Irish political prisoners in England who are political hostages being kept in exile.

They are either liars and brass neck hypocrites bent on selling any gains - very few - made by workers in Britain just to regain the whip hand in the next election, suffering from a terminal case of 'there are none so blind as those that do not wish to see'. Or not a Labour Party at all but just another shade of Conservative blight.

Many thanks for the opportunity of reading FRFI, big greetings to the Non-Stop Picket, all the Irish family in English prisons and those British prisoners that are pushing for basic rights in prisons.

Solidarity and strength.
GERRY HANRATTY
Kaisheim Prison
Bavaria

Fighting the Poll Tax

On 10 June the Tayside Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Unions organised a demonstration in Dundee to bring together all those locally involved in the non-payment campaign. Recent news suggesting that by June over 100,000 people had not paid their Poll Tax on Tayside gave strength to the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' movement. In Scotland itself an estimated one million had not paid so far.

What could mar the event but the familiar alliance of Labour councillors and police. Only a couple of days before the march they had insisted on the demonstration beginning at 9.30am. On the day people assembled at the original time of 11 am oblivious to the fact that the march was now effectively banned!

The Militant organisation

which controls the anti-Poll Tax unions in Scotland had organised a fleet of buses to take people on to the rally in the town. On addressing the crowd which was now growing larger they put this forward as the only alternative. However, comrades from FRFI/RCG, WRP and SWP also spoke and insisted that it be put to the people there that an immediate protest be organised. Despite some remarks from Militant, so reminiscent of their big brothers in the Labour and trade union movement, about not being here to get arrested and that there were women and children present, the working class people present, especially the women and children, voted overwhelmingly to protest.

500 people, with not one Labour Party or trade union banner present, then marched on the pavement to the rally.
MIKE TAYLOR
Dundee.

'Once I was a Washing Machine'

In writing *Once I was a Washing Machine*, we have overcome severe disadvantages which exclude us from published literature: we overcame poor schooling, poor housing, long working hours and repressive family responsibilities. Some of us had to wait for retirement or redundancy before taking up writing. One comrade had to conquer the obstacle of adult illiteracy before he could write about it. His contribution was ignored in your reviewer's 14 facetious column inches.

Susan Davidson regards these issues as 'social workerist' but I reckon that the 'individual melancholy' of, for instance, my own personal struggles against homophobia and alcoholism, would have gone comparatively smoothly if I were a college graduate with a middle class life style. Poems by working class people are valuable *per se*.

The very book was a struggle in

its own right, and in itself was a celebration of a victory in that fight back. We would not have stood a chance, had we not organised together democratically as the Federation of Workers and Writers and Community Publishers, but I never imagined that when 'Washing Machine' emerged from three years editing we would not only be underpromoted, but then ignored by the bourgeois media and also damned by faint praise in *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*.

I will accept that there is better writing in Asia, Africa, any school you like, especially the striking miners' children: of course the best literature arises when the struggle is most intense. But if Davidson believes 'there are some very nice poems in this anthology', then our movement deserves encouragement rather than castigation.
MIKE BURGESS
South London

LETTERS

Unite for Irish self-determination

At the moment there are two, probably more later, anti-imperialist contingents demonstrating at the 12 August Time To Go march and rally. We have Hands Off Ireland and the anti-imperialist contingent made up of three groupings; both have the same slogans, 'Troops Out Now! Self Determination for the Irish People as a Whole!'

The demonstration is to mark the twentieth anniversary of British imperialism sending troops into Ireland, and it is shameful that the left cannot unite physically as one force behind a common banner. I feel it would be a disaster if we let this important anniversary pass by without the maximum anti-imperialist propaganda and publicity due to left-wing sectarian groups who are handing the Time To Go reformist leaders a victory in

advance.

Through the columns of your paper I would like to appeal to all factions to pursue the following course of action: a) Full support for the IFM demonstration on 5 August, b) Full participation in the 12 August Time To Go demonstration, united as one contingent, behind one banner under the common slogans of 'Troops Out Now! Self-Determination for the Irish People as a Whole!' This does not mean that political organisations should hide their identity. On the contrary, it would enhance the spirit of unity and undermine the domination of the fake Time To Go lefts, to see banners displaying the fact that the RCG, Workers Power, Leninists etc. are united as one anti-imperialist front.
P COWAN
South London

Analysing socialism

After attending the FRFI Readers & Supporters Group on 'China in Turmoil', I realised that the way we analysed Chinese socialism was different from the way we have looked at other socialist countries; we went through the historical developments and problems of socialist China and the effects of imperialism.

This analysis showed us how China had shifted between the use of capitalist methods and pure socialist ideology. This will happen again after the recent events in China, where a shift toward capitalist methods has created a prosperous petit-bourgeoisie. In order to put it down, the government will have to strengthen the party. This will be aided by the slowing down of

imperialist involvement in China.

The point is, this same shift from side to side must happen to varying degrees in Cuba, USSR, Vietnam, GDR etc. The same comprehensive analysis of the mistakes of the Communist Party in China should be made when studying any socialist country. Two things which are rarely touched on in this debate are the significance and size of the petit-bourgeoisie in the socialist countries, and the level of corruption in the party and the steps being taken against it.

I thought the new RCG pamphlet *A New Path for Socialism* made it much easier to understand some of the problems underlying what is going on in China. I hope this debate on the socialist countries will continue.
JOHN W.
Manchester

'Thank you'

A brief word of thanks from the Sam Manna Support Group for all your help and advice towards the campaign which has secured for Sam his right to remain permanently in this country.

At first the prospect for the campaign seemed bleak. Sam's case was twice rejected in the courts and the Home Office seemed unwilling to listen to pleas on his behalf even from his MP Tony Lloyd. The Home Office seemed intent on getting rid of him without delay, perhaps because they feared a campaign might develop.

The final outcome emphasises the importance of campaigns

which are firmly rooted in the community of the intended victim and which takes to the streets in his support. In delivering this strategy, in mobilising the local community and in developing a strong public presence, the RCG played an important part. It was particularly important that a campaign such as this gathered public momentum in view of Viraj Mendis' deportation.

The RCG have given invaluable assistance in carrying the anti-deportation struggle back onto the streets of Manchester and in securing a notable success. Their help is very much appreciated. Yours fraternally,
BILL WILLIAMS
Sam Manna Support Group

Randle and Pottle are not criminals

This is the letter I sent to Graham Riddick, Conservative MP, re Michael Randle and Pat Pottle. Incidentally I haven't had a reply from him.

Dear Graham Riddick, I have just watched 'The Blake escape' and was appalled to hear your comments that Michael Randle and Pat Pottle were criminals and should be prosecuted and probably receive a sentence of at least four years in jail. This for something that happened 22 years ago.

I hope you will try to understand the feelings of people who had just been through the 1939-1945 war. We could see the build up for a nuclear holocaust directly after 1945 and were told that the Soviet Union, who were our allies and had lost 20 million people, were now the enemy. The USA encouraged paranoia to enable the build up of the military industrial complex - McCarthy

purge, House Committees of UnAmerican activities, John Birch Society, etc. No wonder we acted against this militarism and build up for mass genocide and carried out civil disobedience. People were put in prison for this non-violent action. Dr Albert Schweitzer, from his hospital bed at Lambarene in the Congo, wrote to Lord Bertrand Russell, while Russell was in prison for civil disobedience - 'I believe it is right to organise mass movements of this sort, the world starts to be moved by it, I am with you in the struggle'.

Nazi war criminals are hiding in this country, yet the government will not do anything to track them down. Mr Geoffrey Howe said that the time lapse was too long.

The CIA and Britain helped these criminals to escape.

The Committee of 100 was treated abominably and CND has also been witch-hunted. It is no

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Labour's faith in Europe

In your otherwise accurate attack on the Labour Party's Policy Review (FRFI 87), you omitted to stress the dangers of their born-again faith in Europe.

The Labour and TUC leadership's naive belief that European unity will advance the cause of socialism is, of course, nonsense. The reality is that greater co-operation between Western European governments will increase the exploitation of the poorest workers throughout the continent, strengthen NATO and encourage the already disturbing growth of racism.

This last effect can be seen clearly in the recent dispute over the Lingua programme, in which all children in European schools were to learn two European foreign languages. The consequence of such a move would be to destroy the work of educationalists struggling for the rights and recognition of non-European languages. In ILEA schools over 250 languages are spoken by the pupils; to insist that the limited time available for language teaching is spent on European tongues would be to ensure that the values of the 'market' exclude the values of human beings. It would also further accentuate a vision of a united Europe that is inherently white, Western and closed.

Thatcher's rejection of the proposal was typically hypocritical, particularly at a time when her Secretary of State is busy centralising power in education and attacking the anti-racist initiatives that have been created. But Labour's image of a progressive role for Europe - an image that glosses over the capitalist nature of the EC - must also be exposed as being reactionary and illusory.
MALCOLM PREST
London

wonder when people like Michael Randle and Pat Pottle are put in prison that they wanted to help George Blake get to the Soviet Union, they felt like fellow human beings.

Real criminals today are the arms traders, the military industrial complex, financiers/investors (the preparation for the holocaust makes them millionaires). And governments who will not - do not want - to disarm, but want to 'modernise' nuclear weapons, ignoring any Soviet initiatives and they have made many, by Mr Gorbachev's 'new thinking, not new weapons' statements.

I am 68 years old, a survivor of the Coventry blitz - 14 November, 1940 - and a Quaker and stand for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, as many of my friends do, whether they are religious, humanist, agnostic or atheist.

I hope and pray that you and many other MPs will see truth and act for justice.
In all sincerity,
MARJORIE WHITEMAN

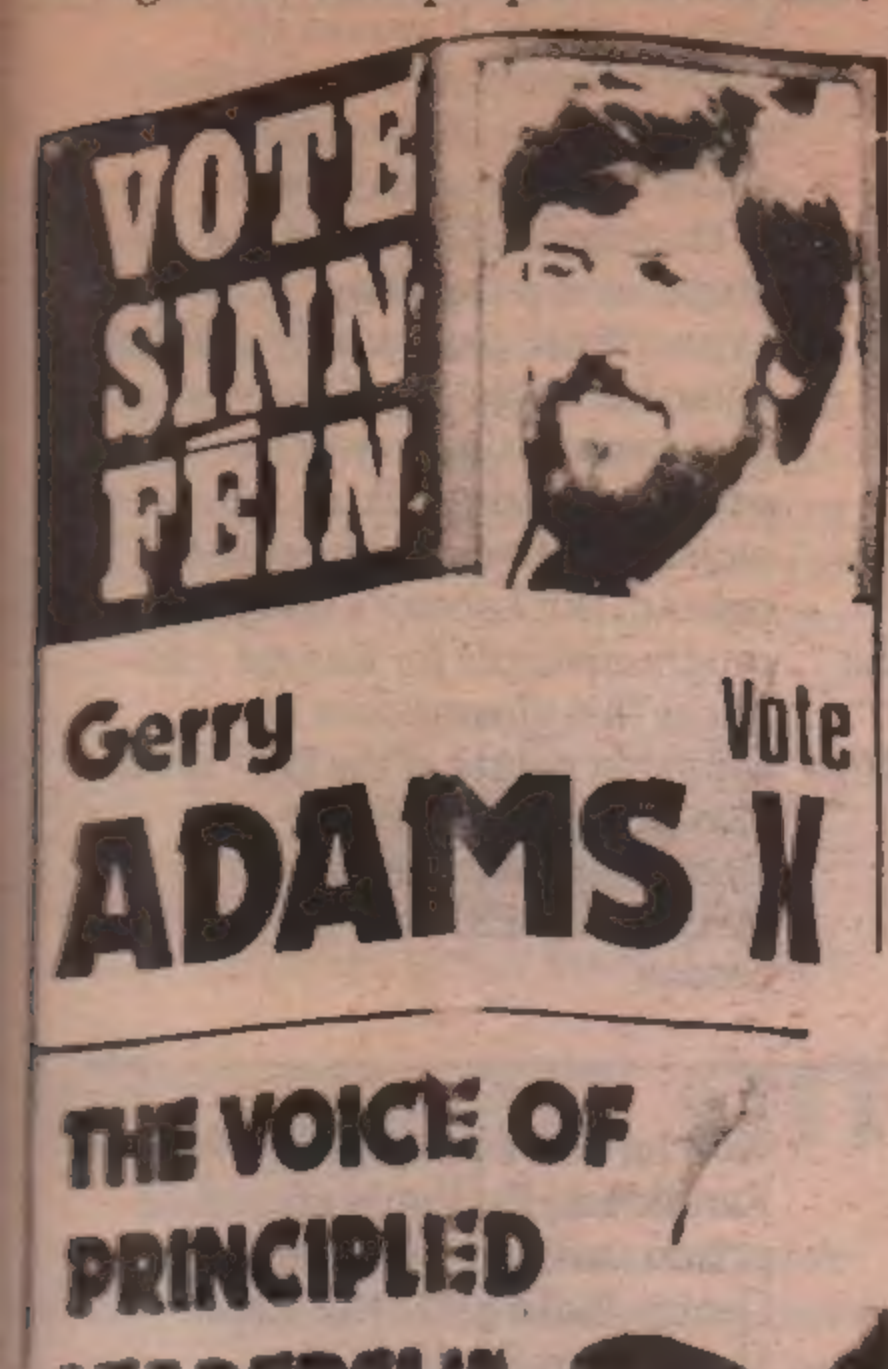
20 years of resistance

Gerry Adams's message for socialists

Twenty years ago, on 14 August 1969, the British Labour government sent the army into the Six Counties of Ireland. They sent them in because the sectarian police force in the Six Counties was in danger of losing in the struggle against the Catholic minority on the march for equal rights. MAXINE WILLIAMS argues for Troops Out and self-determination for the Irish people.

It soon became clear that the function of the British army was to force the nationalist people to accept a status quo of institutionalised discrimination in a sectarian statelet. British imperialism had no progressive role to play in Ireland and only holds on to its rule there by terror.

For two decades, the British state, incomparably more powerful than the nationalist minority in terms of military might, has thrown everything at the Irish people: internment,



torture, imprisonment, frame ups, murder, undercover assassination, daily harassment and brutality. The Irish people remain unbeaten, knowing that there can be no peace or progress until Britain is driven out. They have given an example of courage, determination and political consciousness, unique in Europe in the past twenty years.

Yet here in Britain there remains no significant movement of opposition to British rule in Ireland. Gerry Adams' speech to the Sheffield Socialist Conference deals with these issues. The reasons for the absence of a solidarity movement are clear. Firstly, the Labour Party is still seen by most of the British left, (in what must now be the longest and sickest display of the triumph of hope over reality) as a vehicle for socialist change. It's record on Ireland proves otherwise. Labour has consistently, since it was founded, taken the side of imperialism on the Irish question.

Secondly, British socialists, who should be taking the lead in building a solidarity movement suffer from a very bad dose of what Gerry Adams calls 'benign imperialism'. They have spent far more of the past twenty years 'criticising' the Irish movement than they have in trying to build support.

Today, despite the much vaunted Time to Go initiative, the outlook for an effective solidarity movement is grim. Time to Go is only the latest in a long line of allegedly broad based movements which have arrived with a fanfare and disappeared without trace. 'Broad based' is almost always shorthand for being subordinated to the Labour Party in some ill defined way. Time to Go cannot apparently even bring itself to give unequivocal support for the demand for self determination for the Irish people. And in the face of splits and divisions that have rent the Irish solidarity movement for two decades its organisers have decided to simply keep to themselves the debate over its programme. If the past years have shown anything, they have shown that only the fullest debate and democracy can enable people of different views to work together.

Gerry Adams is absolutely right to argue that self-determination, is the key demand and that building a movement on this basis must be a priority for British socialists. This has been the standpoint consistently argued over the years by the RCG since the late 1970s. We have argued precisely this and been vilified for it. We have said 'if the British working class fail to make common cause with the Irish people it will be incapable of defending itself.' (Quote from Ireland Key to the British Revolution - David Reed) It must be clear by now that the absence of a movement on this question is not only a symptom of, but also one of the causes of, the feeble character of the opposition movement in Britain today.

We are pleased to print extracts from Gerry Adams speech to the Sheffield Socialist Conference, 18 June, to encourage the debate on these issues.

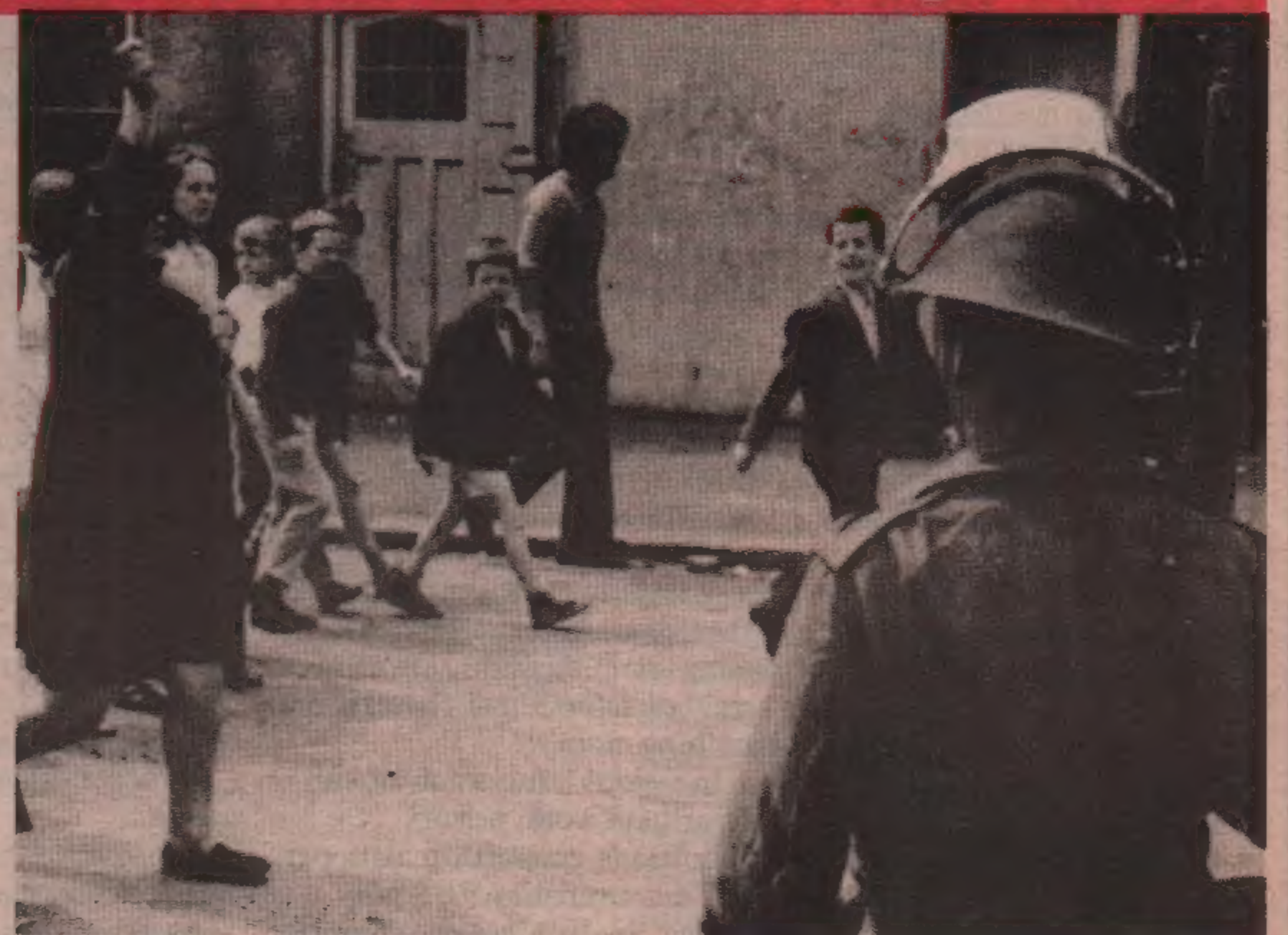
GERRY ADAMS at Sheffield

In the Six Counties of course... the effects of the British presence are much more keenly felt. But partition

distorts all of life in Ireland... Economically it has meant for the Twenty Six County state... for example one in every two and half people are forced to emigrate... a third are living below the poverty level, that we have unemployment queues growing. Yet the Twenty Six county state is the twenty seventh wealthiest in the world. Ireland isn't poor. We're poor people, with a wealthy clique in charge of our country both south and north. In the Six Counties since the state was established we have had a permanent state of emergency... the state was created in bloodshed and violence. In order to maintain it special laws and powers were given to the state authorities... We have discrimination and the Labour Party leadership is going to acquiesce in that in the weeks ahead in their support for the amendments in the anti-discrimination legislation being moved by the Thatcher government. Discrimination that means if you're a Catholic then you are two and half to three times more likely to be unemployed...

... the Labour leadership's record in Ireland is one which disappoints me and I'm not naive... It's a disgraceful record. Thatcher when she came to power came to power because the last Labour government fell as a direct consequence of its Irish policy... What Thatcher has done is simply to continue with the policies which successive Labour governments had put in train... its record on Ireland has been and is a colonial record. What's the difference between Concannon and Roy Mason and Tom King, the colonial rulers of the past twenty years?... I would argue the present policy is a fudge. That it deliberately ignores the gerrymandered nature of the Six County state. And the left, the broad left, not just the labour left and, if I may say this with fraternal comradeship, have things to learn. Like humility... (ap-

An army roundup of nationalist men in Derry in the early 70s



Nationalists break a curfew imposed by the British Army

plause) I also welcome observations from comrades as to what we're doing wrong in Ireland... we haven't got all the answers... what we have is a section of people engaged in struggle and doing our best to move forward. So don't tell us, unless your prepared to have us tell you, how we should organise in Cork or Dublin or Derry or Portadown. Unless you're prepared to organise in Liverpool and Manchester and Birmingham... (applause) and don't base your support for the Irish struggle on whether you like me or whether I give a good speech. Or whether SF's feminist enough, or socialist enough, or left wing enough or whether this is going to bring socialism to Ireland. I mean you haven't done a very good job of bringing socialism to Britain. So let's be fraternal, let's live with each other on the basis of equality, let's get rid of the benign imperialism that is probably part of a culture of a country that has an imperialist class.

The position in Ireland is that I and many other people in Ireland want to see a socialist society in Ireland. But that's up to the Irish people. The issue for everyone else is have the Irish people the right to self-determination? That's the issue (applause). The people of Ireland have the right to national self-determination. What they do with that is up to themselves but the support should not be in any way conditional. Neither should one get on to hooks about supporting the IRA... that isn't the issue. The issue is do you support the right of the Irish people to self-determination. And from there we get into all sorts of difficulties like for example, 'well we support the right to self-determination, but if we left wouldn't there be a bloodbath, what would happen to the Protestants? What would happen, how would Ireland economically survive?' That's none of your business. (applause)... What we have in my country is an ar-

my of occupation. What we have to do is to get rid of that army, that administration and all of the paraphernalia which goes with it.

... In Sinn Fein's Scenario for Peace document we are saying that a British government should declare that it will leave Ireland in the lifetime of a government, that will be irreversible... Once the reason for sectarianism is removed, then as a collective cancer in the community it ceases... That's up to us to develop a society not for the Protestants but with them... The Catholics aren't the majority, the working class in Ireland, Protestant and Catholic are the majority, (applause)...

... I presume that everyone in this hall agrees that the British have no right to be in Ireland, so let's start on that basis, that the British administration, partition of the country has no part to play. So what do we do about it?... I would argue that we go about in a programmed way dealing with the resolution of the problem. I know it's difficult and people get intimidated and harassed... there's an attempt to treat you like political or social lepers. I've been there myself I know what it's like. But I think it's your duty to raise these issues on a daily basis... it's a battle for ideas... it should be a priority issue. There are numerous other issues facing a socialist movement in this country but the key to a system of socialism in Britain lies in the old Marxist idiom that a nation that enslaves another cannot itself be free. So the resolution of our British problem should be a priority.

It's June twenty years ago that the British army was put on active service, in August it was moved in... It's twenty years now. There are thousands dead, there are thousands and thousands injured. The struggle's going to go on. I know it's a hard struggle. I think you people can take hope from our struggle because you've had your defeats and you've faced ten years of Thatcherism and probably at times feel very isolated. You don't know the half of it. We're not beaten yet and you shouldn't be beaten yet... it's inevitable as the struggle continues that we are going to force the British establishment to leave our country. But how long it's going to take is dependent on all of us. What price we're going to have to pay is dependent on all of us... So what we have to ask ourselves is can we shorten the struggle... can we make that price any less. And if you accept the proposition that I have put to this meeting, that support for national self determination should be a part, a basic part of a socialist movement in this country, then you can shorten the time, you can lower the price... So when we meet here again next year Ireland will not be something that you have just touched upon, but Ireland will be something that you have actively worked for. ■